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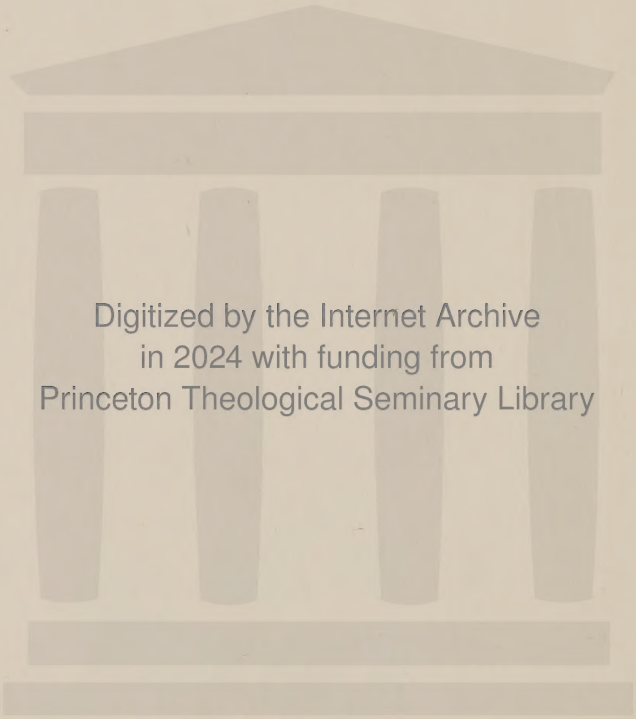
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THE MODERN MOVEMENT IN AMERICAN THEOLOGY

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THE MODERN MOVEMENT IN AMERICAN THEOLOGY

Sketches in the History of American Protestant Thought from the Civil War to the World War

By

FRANK HUGH FOSTER

NEW YORK
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FOREWORD

FOR some weeks in 1932 I was a private pupil of the late Professor Foster at his home in Oberlin. At that time he showed me a half-completed manuscript on a subject in which he had already made his mark,—a continuation, as it were, of his remarkable *Genetic History of the New England Theology* (University of Chicago Press, 1907). To my mind, the manuscript seemed worthy of completion. The treatment was thorough; the style was lucid and comparatively free of the technical terminology that makes the *Genetic History* on the whole rather difficult for the general reader to understand. The manuscript was written throughout from one point of view,—unlike the *Genetic History,* parts of which were written before, and the remainder after, the author ceased to believe in the New England Theology. Furthermore, the New England Theology has collapsed; but Horace Bushnell, T. T. Munger, W. N. Clarke, Washington Gladden and George A. Gordon are still living influences in the religious thought of the English-speaking peoples.

Dr. Foster told me that he had not worked on the manuscript for some years; and when I asked him why, it became evident that although there were many reasons why he had abandoned the work, chief among them was the fact that he needed encouragement. So I did what I could, in as respectful a manner as possible, to urge him to complete the work he had so brilliantly begun. But it was not until I obtained the assistance of my friend President Everett C. Herrick, of the Andover Newton Theological School, that he could be induced to do so. At Dr. Herrick's recommendation, the trustees of the Newton Theological Institution—one of Andover Newton's two governing boards—invited Dr. Foster to deliver the Stephen Greene Lectures for 1934-35, using the manuscript as

the basis for the lectures; and Dr. Foster accepted the invitation. He delivered the lectures, and later gave me the manuscript, with the express understanding that if it were ever to appear in print, the text should appear exactly as he wrote it. My promise to him has been kept: the text has not been added to or subtracted from. There are, however, a few minor editorial corrections (enclosed within square brackets), which neither the publishers nor I considered as coming within the range of Dr. Foster's stipulation. These changes have been made solely in the interests of accuracy. In no case has an alteration been made that would affect the author's line of reasoning.

Dr. Foster was a great scholar, thorough in research, clear in thought and expression—qualities due not only to great native gifts and a lifetime of the hardest kind of labour, but also to the training given him at Harvard College and Andover Theological Seminary, and at the University of Leipzig, of which he was a doctor of philosophy. He was a skilled teacher, and thought much and deeply about the problems of higher education; his *Seminary Method of Original Study in the Historical Sciences* (Scribners, 1888) is still a work of great value in this field. Last but not least, he was a stimulating and engaging friend, even to those who, like myself, were very much his juniors. Hundreds of ministers and teachers, among them many men of note, count themselves fortunate to have had him for a guide, philosopher, critic, and friend.

JOHN GARDNER GREENE
Director of the Charles Street Meeting-House Society, Boston; formerly Instructor in Church History in the Tufts College School of Religion.

Boston, Massachusetts.

PREFACE

THIS book takes up the story of the New England Theology where a previous volume by this writer left it. It is a collection of sketches rather than an attempt at a complete history. Other writers have made similar attempts which will all, it is to be hoped, assist the future historian, when the turmoil of investigation and discussion shall be quieted for a time, in preparing a complete and well developed account of the whole great movement. Congregationalists have largely taken the lead up to the date reached by these sketches (1914), and it seems proper that a Congregationalist should tell their story. The account is, it is hoped, appreciative, even though it is highly critical. But some attention has been paid to other Christian bodies, and especially to our fellow congregationalists, the Baptists. It is thought also that there are some lessons to be learned from this review which should be had in mind in the discussions of the present hour.

The MS. of the book was the basis of four lectures given at Andover Newton Theological School in 1934 on the Stephen Greene Foundation.

There is a certain autobiographical element in the following pages which I hope is managed so as to avoid giving offence and to deserve the judgment that it is objective.

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I

INTRODUCTION

IN A former volume the writer has given an account of the first movement in New England in radical modification of the inherited theology, that which ultimately resulted in the formation of those denominations called Unitarians and Universalists, with sufficient fulness for the purposes of this history. It began in the earliest years of the eighteenth century by questioning the doctrine of the Trinity, in some degree of dependence upon English thought. Its main motive force lay, however, in its view of human nature, which was, in part at least, derived from the teachings of Edwards and Hopkins as to the nature of virtue and the character of God, leading it to a larger humanity than the older theology possessed. Doubtless the influence of developed Unitarianism upon the orthodox wing of divided Congregationalism was considerable and constant, but it was for the most part unconfessed, and largely unconscious, for the repudiation of the doctrine of the deity of Christ led to a kind of shuddering antipathy to Unitarianism which has survived to this more liberal time and is to be seen in the ostracism which even co-operative Unitarians receive in the Y.M.C.A. and the [Federal Council] of Churches. Such influences, subterranean and subconscious, need not detain us long. They are hardly to be traced in the course of actual events. The liberal movement among the orthodox which revolutionized our public teaching of theology in the closing years of the nineteenth century, and which is the object of our present study, had sources of its own, quite diverse and of various origin, which sufficiently account for it, sources to be sought in the great currents of thought in the world at large. And it should be distinctly said at the beginning of this history that it was a movement forced upon the minds of our thinkers by the light

which flooded their eyes in this modern time. It was not the product of any restlessness of spirit, of any frivolity or instability or wantonness, but resulted from the compulsion of evident truth now first known. It was a conservative movement, so conservative in clinging to everything which it had deemed precious in the past till driven to relinquishing it, that it rather merits criticism for its slowness and hesitation than condemnation for haste and recklessness. Doubtless the unprogressive were startled and shocked by the successive steps of the advance and were led to attribute to the disturbers of the theological peace all sorts of revolutionary designs. But the survey of the history which we are now about to make will disabuse our minds of any such conceptions.

For the first of these great influences leading in New England to a new theology we are to go back to the time of the Protestant Reformation and to the publication of the Copernican system of astronomy in 1543. The discovery of the fact that the earth is not the centre of the universe nor even of any great magnitude had an effect which has not yet reached its full development. It was no longer possible that a theology which made all eternity to turn upon the events in Eden and upon Calvary should permanently pass for the undeniable truth. Theology had to widen itself to the contemplation of an illimitable universe. In this wider view, the significance of individual events became greatly changed.

Natural science received its first powerful impulse in the direction which it has followed to such success in the last century and the first decades of the present, when the new chemistry was established by Priestley and Lavoisier. Large expectation and boundless enthusiasm were awakened by this event and by the successes which began immediately to follow. And when geology came forward with its demand for unmeasured duration to provide for the changes which had taken place in the preparation of the earth for the dwelling-place of man, the effect upon theology was immediate. The six days of *Genesis* had to be understood in a new way. And then came the idea of law in the natural world. Gravitation, with its laws of mo-

tion; the fundamental laws of chemistry,—that there is no increase or diminution of the quantity of matter, that the elements combine in definite proportions; the law of the permanence of force, its various transformations, and its unity; and the still more fundamental law of causation—all had their direct application to theology, and necessitated large and most important changes. Such changes came only slowly, for most of the applications of the truth learned from nature were somewhat remote from the immediate interests of the times, or seemed to the apologist easily adjusted to the old formulations of truth. But when Darwin came forward in the middle of the nineteenth century with his doctrine of evolution, a commotion was created which has not ceased to this day. What changes it forced upon thinkers we shall see as we go on, for most of the new suggestions of the liberals had their origin in the transformation of all thinking under the influence of evolution.

Meanwhile, a new philosophy was growing up. The old Scotch philosophy of Reid, Stewart, and their co-laborers had been overturned by Sir William Hamilton, unconsciously to himself, when he called attention to the Germans, Kant and his successors, and propounded his own philosophy of the unconditioned. In spite of the vogue which Hegel had for a time, the trend of philosophy was toward the empirical school, and when evolution took a hand in determining the course of philosophical study, as it did also in history, there arose a new experimental psychology and a sociology which suggested marked changes in religious life and doctrine. There came also a new interest in humanity out of the new methods of studying history. Evolutionary history encroached even upon the domain of Old Testament learning, and a revolutionary view of the history of Israel led to consequent revolutionary views of the elements of the religion of Israel and of its relation to Christianity. And at last the higher criticism attacked the problems of New Testament authorship and composition with no less thoroughgoing results.

Of course, a new world came out of all this. Thoughtful

ministers could not but perceive that in the minds of educated laymen the foundations of the old theology were shaken, and with them the allegiance to the Church itself. They were driven to the consideration of the question how the Church and even religion were to be saved in the new time from what seemed to the casual thinker fatal assaults. They were forced, therefore, by the practical necessities of pastors and preachers to study the new thought of the times, and to ask what the truth was, and how it could be preached to save men to righteousness of life and to peace of heart. And hence began and developed what its friends styled "the New Theology."

Among evangelical denominations the Congregational afforded to the new movement the freest field, and here it met with its largest extension and most rapid progress. The so-called "Congregational" churches form a small denomination, but they have been active in the study of the philosophy of religion and have, through their numerous writers and through the educational institutions which they have founded, exercised an influence upon the course of religious thought in America entirely out of proportion to their numerical size. The investigation of the liberal movement among American churches would of necessity give them the principal place in the attention of the student. Congregationalists have, as a matter of fact, largely been the leaders in the movement, and its history is principally a part of their history. Liberalism has been with them a matter of internal necessity. It has been their great good fortune to be free churches, free from ecclesiastical control and free in the association of like-minded men zealous for the truth and determined to know it ever more perfectly. They are historically innovators, from Scrooby to Plymouth, and from Boston to Providence. They have always been looking for more light, and they have been eager to follow it. The great, closely organized churches, like the Presbyterian and Episcopalian, cannot pass through a course of peaceful evolution of doctrine. Their only method is revolution. Hence the

work of leadership has fallen upon these churches, whose natural American aggressiveness has been touched and hallowed by a longing for a deeper experience of religion, and for an ever increasing understanding of its fundamental principles. That leadership will principally occupy us at this time.

II

ESCHATOLOGICAL BEGINNINGS

ORTHODOX New England Congregationalism was probably as united theologically about the opening of the Civil War as it had ever been. The years of discussion that had developed the "New England" system of thought had brought about a very large acceptance of this modification of the original Calvinism. The period of the War was unfavourable to theological thought, and no important work upon any of the great questions which were so frequently handled in the course of the development of the new school appeared during that time. There was scarcely any discussion of theological themes, even in a less formal way—with a single exception. Eschatological questions received what attention the distracted mind of the North had to give to theology, and we find a small number of works dealing with them, appearing in 1861 and following years. And it was at this point that the tendency to depart from the received system, while retaining its principal doctrines, manifested itself. The explanation of the choice of this topic is to be found, no doubt, partly in the previous history of the school. The Universalist controversy had, in addition to the inherent attraction of the subject, given a further attraction to it by the effect produced in other branches of the theological system, particularly in the central doctrine of the Atonement.[1] But the great reason was given by the bereavements resulting from the War. Every hamlet had its soldier's grave, every home mourned some one, nearer or more remote, who had fallen in battle. And, as after the Great War of 1914, the subject of spiritualism acquired a new and immense interest to multitudes, so did the questions of eschatology, and especially that of the fate of the impenitent dead, at the time of this earlier contest. For the reigning theology taught the doctrine of a judgment to come, the issues of which were life and death.

In the year 1876 there appeared a little book with the title, *Is "Eternal" Punishment Endless? By an Orthodox Minister of the Gospel.* The author was the Rev. James M. Whiton, then Principal of the Williston Academy, at Easthampton, Massachusetts, who was at various times pastor and professor, and finally one of the editorial staff of *The Outlook;* and who continued to contribute articles and books upon the theological questions of the day, and exercised no little influence for many years. His conclusion reached in this book was summarized by himself in these words:

"That the Bible, while teaching future punishment in terms sufficiently explicit and severe for the purposes of moral government, does not positively declare the duration of that punishment. An unbiased criticism by the best light that modern scholarship affords does not accept the sense which tradition has attached to some of the words of Scripture upon this subject. The Bible, however, reveals no restoration of 'the lost.' It casts no ray of hope upon the future of him who has wasted the present life. But, on the other hand, it does not assert the absolute endlessness of his punishment. Endless it may be, so far as any divine word to the contrary has reached us. But, after the fullest searching of the Bible teachings, a cloud of impenetrable mystery hides the ultimate lot of the wicked,—a mystery so plainly full of woe that it is likely to prove quite as salutary for moral purposes as any precise and clear disclosure." [2]

All that Dr. Whiton sought to prove was, therefore, that the future punishment of the finally impenitent *might not* be endless,—surely a very small modification of the doctrine, and one illustrating the strong conservatism of the theological spirit of the times.

The book was thought by the editor of the Andover quarterly, the *Bibliotheca Sacra,* worthy of a reply, and the task was assigned to the present writer, then just graduated from Andover Seminary and the pastor of a neighbouring church. Dr. Whiton's argument was mainly this, that *aionios,* the Greek word translated "eternal," meant "belonging to the age (*aion*)," and was thus qualitative rather than quantitative. This point was carefully examined by the reviewer, together

with a large number of auxiliary arguments which were advanced in the book. He satisfied himself that the answer was conclusive, and that the proposed modification of the received doctrine was not warranted by a sound exegesis of Scripture.[3] It is of less importance to decide now whether he was really successful or not, for the true element of interest to the historical student lies at quite another point, viz., the complete failure of both parties to understand the theological situation of the times, and the absolue futility of the whole argument, both pro and con, to serve its generation. Darwin had published his *Origin of Species,* propounding the theory of evolution, seventeen years before, and Graf had applied the principles of historical investigation to the Old Testament in his *Geschichtliche Bücher des alten Testaments,* ten years before. By this time alert theologians knew that the question to be settled before any such investigation as Dr. Whiton's was entered upon, was not an exegetical one as to the meaning of the Bible, but one as to the human element in the Bible in relation to the divine element, and as to the authority of the Bible to control religious thought. Dr. Whiton was excusable perhaps for his attitude, since he had passed through no theological school, and his young antagonist the less reprehensible for the fact that Andover had taught him little about evolution and nothing about Biblical criticism. But theology could scarcely be expected to make much progress under such blind leaders of the blind. If somehow some ray of rationality could not shine into the theological darkness, little was to be hoped for in the way of advance till some more favoured day.

Dr. Whiton's book was, however, an indubitable sign of ferment in the thinking of theologians, of which those who were lead in the further discussions may have been more aware than the general public. Whatever individuals may have known about the progress of new opinions, the first notice to the churches at large of the impending changes was given at the council for the installation of the Rev. James F. Merriam at Indian Orchard, a village in the township of Springfield, Massa-

chusetts, in the late Fall of 1877. This gentleman was a member of one of the first families of Springfield, his father being George Merriam, of the well known firm of G. and C. Merriam, publishers. He had been supplying the church in Indian Orchard for some time from Sunday to Sunday, and had finally received a call to the pastorate. At the council called for his installation he presented a statement of his theological views, which contained the following passage:

"In regard to the matter of the eternal punishment of those impenitent at death, I believe the Bible does not teach it; nor do I believe it teaches the contrary. It leaves the question an open one. Hence in my public teaching and ministry, as a minister of the Gospel, I would teach neither the one nor the other. In my private judgment and belief I hold that future punishment, if eternal in any sense, is so in the sense that it is eternal death, or annihilation. And I cannot promise to refrain from expressing myself privately, simply as an individual expression, a personal belief, to that effect when in my judgment I can thereby do good." [4]

Mr. Merriam's personal character was of the highest, and his acceptance with the Orchard church such that, after the council, they immediately invited him to continue in the supply of their pulpit, thus exercising their rights as a Congregational church. The council felt reluctant to refuse him installation, but they did not feel at liberty to install a man who departed from the generally received doctrine of the denomination at large. It may be that they felt and feared the incoming tide. A very considerable controversy arose in connection with this event, which drew public attention to the doctrine of future punishment, and the number of utterances made of a character contrary to the hitherto generally received opinion gave an undoubted impulse to the new movement. Mr. Merriam's opinions upon the Atonement also were not altogether satisfactory to the council, which fact marks him out as thinker of more importance than mere divergence from the accepted views upon future punishment alone would have made him. But he did not engage in controversy, and does not appear among the

protagonists of the new movement who advocated and expounded it in the press.

The following Sunday the Springfield ministers all preached upon the Indian Orchard council, and generally approved the course of the council as the only consistent course. But there was one exception. The Rev. Washington Gladden, pastor of the North Church, said in his discourse that "Congregationalism . . . is just Christianity—nothing less, nothing more," with "no peculiarity." He refused to recognize any "denominational" responsibility, and, therefore, favoured the installation of Mr. Merriam, since he sympathized more or less clearly with Mr. Merriam's position. Thus emerged into the theological world one who had already written freely on theological themes as editor of *The Independent,* and was to be prominent among the leaders of the new thought and of the denomination for many years, and finally to be raised to its chief post of honour as Moderator of the National Council, and universally acknowledged as one of Congregationalism's great men. He possessed some exceptional qualifications for theological leadership. Although he had been unable to secure a regular theological education, he had had the great advantage of the instruction of Dr. Mark Hopkins and Dr. John Bascom in Williams College, where he graduated in 1859. Dr. Hopkins' course in the Westminister catechism, he remarks, "would have been a good equivalent for a Seminary course in systematic theology." [5] It was, doubtless, far better than many. He was thoroughly settled in habits of careful study and possessed a phenomenal capacity for work. Early in his ministry he had fallen under the influence of Frederick W. Robertson and Horace Bushnell, and their "throbbing pages" [6] had both opened his eyes and taught him how to use them. He became, though, not without careful and independent study of his own, a thorough Bushnellite, and had had Dr. Bushnell preach his installation sermon at North Adams some years before. So far as Gladden is concerned, the work of theological modification is the result of the far-reaching and developing influence of Horace Bushnell. And not the least of his qualifications for the work was

his long residence in New York and its vicinity, and the contact with men and affairs which his editorship on *The Independent* had brought him. It was a singularly well-balanced mind which was here brought to the work of renovation, and one which had been set free to a remarkable degree from intellectual bondage and the fear of man. Little by little, he was brought, in consequence of the pressure of public events and as the plain duty of a pastor set for the instruction of his people, to study and speak on all the great themes of theology, and there was always an element of his own personality in whatever he had to say.

In his work on *The Independent* he had "mainly insisted . . . that theology must be moral. Every doctrine must have an ethical foundation." He makes in his *Recollections* the following quotations from an *Independent* editorial, which may be said to sum up his objections to the current theology at this time:

"To teach that God is a being who has a perfect right to bring into the world a creature with faculties impaired, with no power to resist temptation, utterly unable to do right, powerless even to repent of the wrong which he is fated to do, and then send to everlasting misery this helpless creature for the sin which he could not help committing,—to teach such doctrine as this about God is to inflict upon religion a terrible injury and to subvert the very foundations of morality. To say that God may justly punish a man for the sins of his ancestors, that God does blame us for what happened long before we were born, is to blaspheme God, if there be any such thing as blasphemy. To say that any such thing is clearly taught in the Bible is to say that the Bible clearly teaches a monstrous lie. Yet such theology as this is taught in several of our theological seminaries and preached from many of our pulpits. It is idle to say that it is nothing but a philosophical refinement; that the men who come out of our theological seminaries with these notions in their heads never make any use of them in their pulpits. They do make use of them. They are scattering this atrocious stuff all over the land. They are making infidels faster than they are converting sinners. Men say, 'If this is your God, worship him, if you want to, but do not ask us to bow down to your Moloch!' Who

can blame them? For our own part we say, with all emphasis, that between such a theology as this and atheism, we should promptly choose the latter." [7]

Gladden gave a proof of his competence as a thinker and his interest in theology by a pamphlet which he put out the same year with the Merriam council with the title, *Was Bronson Alcott's School a Type of God's Moral Government?* It was a criticism of the governmental theory of the Atonement as presented by Joseph Cook. Mr. Cook was one of the remarkable men of his times. He had studied at both Yale and Harvard and at Andover, and later in Europe. He had founded in 1874 a "Monday Lectureship" in Boston, and for twenty years for a considerable portion of each year delivered to immense audiences and with great acceptance a series of lectures on theology, apologetics and related themes. It was certainly an astonishing achievement. Little need be said here on the contents and character of these lectures. In part, they were theologically a reproduction, almost to the extent of plagiarism, of Professor Park's lectures at Andover. Mr. Cook was a declared conservative and made no attempt to forward the newer thought on theology which was developing in his time, although he helped it on somewhat by the sympathetic stand which he took as to evolution. In one of these lectures he had cited as an illustration of the Atonement, the method of punishment adopted by Mr. Alcott in a school of his, where he made the offending pupil, instead of receiving punishment himself, inflict it upon the teacher. Mr. Gladden denied that this illustration possessed any pertinence. The pupil, he maintained, received the precise punishment which had been threatened, viz., that he would be compelled to chastise the teacher. There was therefore no substitution. He attacked Mr. Cook's constant use of the words "self-evident" and "axiomatic" with great acuteness, and contributed an excellent discussion of the entire inescapability of the punishment due us for our sins. His own view as to the Atonement he presents in this passage:

"This, then, is the substance of the work [that] Jesus Christ comes into the world to do: to conquer the enmity and suspicion of

men by His own great sacrifice; to make them believe that God loves them; then, having won their confidence, to repair by the communication of His own life-giving Spirit the ruin that sin has wrought in their natures; to restore their souls, that are sinking in spiritual death, to life and health and peace—this is what Christ does for men. He reconciles us by His death: He saves us by His life." [8]

His adherence to the older theology at other points is shown by his statement that "Jesus Christ is God," [9] by his acceptance of the Resurrection of Christ,[10] and by his distinct reliance on Biblical authority as the basis of belief. At the same time his acceptance of the Bible is not that of a literalist. He says: "We find texts [that] represent Christ as suffering judicially in our stead and God as being propitiated by His sufferings." [11] These positions he nevertheless rejects. He has thus made a beginning in a new theology, but he has not yet looked the whole field over or found the solid basis for better teaching; but the beginning is a very considerable beginning.

The theological waters had not had time to come to perfect quiet after the Merriam council, when they were stirred again by the Munger council at North Adams. The Rev. T. T. Munger [12] who had been called to the church of which Mr. Gladden had formerly been pastor, was a graduate of Yale, both college and seminary, and had come under the influence of Bushnell, of whom he was later to become the biographer and interpreter. He was a man of large literary gifts, of a delicate and poetic spirit, who rebelled against the somewhat dry and formal character which the New England Theology had taken on in the passage of time. His "statement" before the council declared his cordial sympathy with the great creeds of the church, but did not always seem to accord, in the parts which expressed his own opinions, with their sympathetic acceptance. He seems to have been too much influenced by Bushnell's doctrine of language,[13] and to have fallen into a use of terms which made it hard for one of another type of thought to understand him. The council found some difficulty at this

point.[14] On eschatology he expressed himself at some length, the vital portions of his treatment being summarized in the following sentences and phrases:

"The main point . . . in Christ's treatment of punishment is not its time element, but its certainty; its positiveness, or absoluteness. . . . I am forced to believe that no souls are lost that are salvable. . . . I think [Christ] was generally dealing with a principle, of *eternal fire* rather than of sinners eternally burned, that is, He asserts the permanence of the principle rather than the permanence of the condition of those that are subject to it. . . . I utterly reject the opinion that the great masses of mankind are subjected to endless pains in the future world; the heathen, the ignorant of Christian lands, the simply moral who fall short of a technical standard, the unchurched masses, the common run of humanity. . . . I find relief from the pressure of this subject upon my heart and reason not in theories of universal restoration or annihilation. . . . Nor do I feel the force of governmental theories that demand continued punishment in such a case in order to uphold divine justice. . . . I would not speak of the opportunity of repentance as having passed. . . . I hold . . . rigidly to the principle that sin and penalty are related to each other only as cause and effect." [15]

The council, however, did not withhold its approval from the candidate, and proceeded to the installation, which action was the more significant from the fact that President Mark Hopkins was a member. The event was therefore merely one more indication of a new spirit rising among the Congregational ministry, except as it served to introduce to the theological public one who was soon to take an important and influential part in furthering the "New Theology."

It was an event of far greater importance when there issued from Andover Seminary a few years later the proposal of "improvements" in the accepted theology of the churches. The great triumvirate of unequalled teachers had all retired, Phelps in 1879, Park in 1881, and Thayer in 1882. The only remaining member of the old faculty, and the natural leader in the reconstitution of the faculty and the laying of plans for the

future, was Professor Egbert C. Smyth, Professor of Church History. His studies in history had led him to feel the aridity of much of the New England system and its failure to appreciate the nature of some of the deeper problems which the controversaries of earlier years had thrust upon it.[16] He therefore sought to deepen and enrich our theology by bringing in from the treasures of the past the choicest and greatest thoughts of the great saints and prophets of the church. In all this he was right. Andover certainly needed rejuvenation. But Professor Smyth was, after all, essentially disqualified for the task by his great and incurable conservatism, both of temper and of thought. Andover and Congregationalism at large needed more fervour, more depth, more manful grappling with hard themes, more acquaintance with the course of thought in the world, and a greater responsiveness to its demands, but they did not need to go back to Ignatius to learn what Christianity was. There was too much of a "churchly" spirit in Professor Smyth, and there breathes through his words[17] another spirit also, which is substantially the spirit of Rome. Sacred Scripture is spoken of in a tone which the awakening mind of the times had already rendered thereafter impossible. He was like a mariner fixing his eyes upon the horizon in hope of seeing new continents, while the propeller of his ship is reversed.

The new Andover proposals began with an attempt to clear up certain points in eschatology. "The special inquiry as to the relation of Christ's person, sacrifice, final judgment, to those who never hear the Gospel in this life is becoming more and more urgent and important, *because it is the next and necessary one* now that the Atonement has become a distinct and specific doctrine, and the interpretation has won general approval that it has an absolutely universal relation and intent." They were regarded by their authors as a legitimate development of the New England Theology necessary to the full expression of the motive force and meaning of that school of thought. Unfolded in a series of articles in the *Andover Review,* they were finally published in a small volume, entitled *Progressive Orthodoxy,* in 1886, from which may be gained a

sufficiently accurate and full view of the Andover movement in the direction of theological growth.

While the whole proposition of the Andover professors was by no means contained in their proposals as to eschatology, for interest and real passion this was both the centre and the circumference of their thought. It is remarkable how it breaks out again and again throughout this book, whatever may be the theme under more immediate consideration. Still it cannot properly be weighed except as taken in connection with the "three important postulates of Christian thought and effort" which they sought to reaffirm,—"universal sinfulness, universal atonement, and the indispensableness of faith in Christ." [18] The following statement may be regarded as designed to give the new view in its best and completest form:

"Our view is, then, that God will reveal Himself in Christ to all men. Those who have the Gospel while they are in the body are in the decisive period. Neither Scripture nor the observed tendency of character to become permanently fixed, especially under the Gospel, affords any reason to hope that a more favourable, or, indeed, any opportunity will be given after death. But for those who do not know God in Christ during the earthly life, it seems to us probable that the knowledge they need will be given after death. At the same time, we are not as positive concerning the times, seasons, or circumstances under which God will reveal Himself in Christ as we are that the principle is of universal application: that no man will be finally judged till he knows God in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and that no man will be hopelessly condemned except for the willful and final rejection of Christ. The sin against the Holy Ghost, which is thought to be that hostility to Christ which makes one incapable of redemption, is the only sin for which we are explicitly told there is no forgiveness in any world or age." [19]

Again:

"Our belief is . . . that the destiny of each and all is determined by the personal relation to Christ. If we did not believe this, Christianity would no longer be for us the universal religion, and the teaching that Christ is Son of Man, the universal man, the Head of humanity, would be robbed of its significance." [20]

A more extended quotation will be enough, I think, to place the theory in its full setting, and make it entirely intelligible:

"The vital issue of the day, old and yet ever new, is an issue beside which the question we have been considering seems to be of secondary importance, yet with which it is closely related. The real issue is between Christianity as a supernatural redemption and mere naturalism. Can Christianity be maintained at the point where its adherents place it? Can the doctrine be made good that Christ is a revelation from God, and the supreme, final, universal revelation? Is He more than Jesus of Nazareth, the teacher and founder of one religion among many religions? Can all the attempts that are made to reduce the significance of the person and work of Christ be successfully resisted? Do we stand on firm ground in passing over from the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith? The movement of Christian thought with which we sympathize signifies, in its deepest meaning, the exaltation of Jesus Christ as the Head of humanity, the Son of God, the Redeemer of men, the Mediator of God to the whole universe. For us He is all this, or else He is in no peculiar sense sent of God, and we have no gospel of redemption. We have accepted one side of the great alternative, with all it may involve. We believe Him to be the Redeemer of mankind, the Lord of the living and the dead, the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of His substance. As a corollary from this belief, we are confident that all members of the human family are to know God in Christ. We believe that all the more obscure revelations of God, and all the religions as truly as the religion of the Hebrews, have been an education of the nations preparatory to the clear, glorious, and potent revelation of God in Christ. We believe that the Biblical representations of the final judgment by Christ and of the triumphant consummation of the redemptive kingdom mean that the end is not reached till all mankind, the least and the greatest, the wisest and the most ignorant, the purest and the most depraved, have the knowledge of God's amazing love in Jesus Christ our Lord. We should be content to expend our toil of thought, our debate and contention on the great principles of the Gospel; to be intent and constant in honouring our divine and human Redeemer and in persuading men of the supremacy, authority, efficacy, and universality of His Gospel of Redemption. But since the issue has been joined on the question which is at present so warmly debated, we are willing to meet it at

that point, and to go back from the corollary to the principle, from a single application to those central truths of Christianity in the light of which only can the question receive a sufficient and a complete answer." [21]

There had been growing up in Andover and elsewhere another answer to the question here discussed. It was called the solution of the "essential Christ." It started with the principle, for which the New England divines had fought many a battle, that ability and obligation are commensurate. Those who have not had large opportunities of knowledge and incentive will never be judged by the same standards as those who have. Multitudes in the teeming populations of the world can never become Christians, for they know nothing of Christianity; but they will not be held to its standards. The grace of God is preëminently bestowed upon those who hear the Gospel, but the Spirit of God is not limited to any means, but "worketh where and how He will." Those who, responding to this Spirit of grace, live up to the light they have, are essentially Christian, that is, occupy the same attitude of soul as Christians, though they have an inferior knowledge of God and very different ideals of conduct at many points. Such persons will be saved, for, upon the first knowledge of Christ which they may gain, they will bow in allegiance before Him, recognizing that He is fully that which they have dimly known and followed. Essentially, therefore, they have Christ. All this the new Andover repudiated.

The Andover proposition of a continued probation for all who have not known Christ in this life met with the most lively discussion and, in circles of the old New England Theology, with strenuous opposition. The contest was carried even into the meetings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, delayed the appointment of candidates for the missionary service, and threatened to disrupt the Board. The appeal was made by these conservatives to the Scriptures, the sum and substance of whose message seemed to be the decisiveness of this life in fixing the eternal destiny of men. On the liberal side there was, of course, great gratification that staid

old Andover had attempted a liberalization of the orthodox doctrine, though there was less gratification when it was perceived that she still held fast to the eternal punishment of the "lost," however much her theory might seem to diminish the number of these. There was for a time some repristination of Andover as a school of theology, and ardent and gifted youths in an unusual proportion resorted to it as a hopeful place for finding a generous and living interpretation of Christian truth. But gradually the defects of the new Andover scheme became evident, even if unconfessed. The patronage of the school fell off, proposals were made to remove it to a university that it might enjoy the "university atmosphere," the outcome of which was its removal to Cambridge, at first into an affiliation with Harvard University, but at last into a complete absorption; and finally Andover Seminary, after a hundred years of service, passed into a state of suspended animation.

Those defects were indeed fatal. The study of church history, inasmuch as it has been principally cultivated by scholars, whether Lutheran, Anglican, or Roman, of a leaning towards a certain authority in the history, in its councils, its canons, its "verdict" upon this and that, has a tendency to lead the student to find his ideals of life and doctrine in the past. It will make any man, if he has not an unusual independence and virility of thought, and if he is not in complete sympathy with the spirit of an evolutionary philosophy which sees its goal in the future and places its ideals there also, too conservative and probably reactionary. The leader for the moment of Andover had fallen victim to this tendency. The new Andover theology was *not* new. So its advocates claimed; and they were right. It was old in the sense that much of it had been outlived. It denied the doctrine of ability to repent in favour of an Augustinian inability, and thus negatived the long effort of New England to gain a true doctrine of the freedom of the will. It must be acknowledged that this ability, while formally maintained by Professor Park at Andover, had been somewhat obscured by his adherence to the Edwardian theory of the will.[22] But after all, Andover's voice had been for freedom. Now this

was denied, except to those who should gain it through contact with Christ. "Man's sinful state is such," the Andover professors said, "that *he has no power of deliverance from it.*" [23] It also delivered an affront to the whole spirit of Protestantism, now keener than ever and sustained by all the tendencies of the time, by its assumption of a closed circle of truth, Christianity, which it would not discuss nor permit to be questioned, and of which it claimed to be in possession—one is tempted to add *infallibly*, so much does all this savour of Rome. The volume of essays before us is saturated with this idea, which finds innumerable slight or more significant expressions.[24] This period of ferment, of new methods and materials of thought, of universal questioning of every received idea, was no time for such assumptions.

Perhaps the most flagrant of the new Andover's sins against its times was illustrated in the chapter of our volume devoted to the Scriptures. Here is an essay in which the question of a human element in the Bible is gravely discussed; no knowledge of any criticism of the New Testament is indicated, although Mangold's Bleek's *Einleitung* and Weiss's *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testament* were already published, and demanded attention from progressive theologians; and no knowledge of the far-reaching results of the Old Testament criticism, already sufficiently set forth by Wellhausen and Schultz, exhibiting as it already did, for example, the entirely human and natural origin of the whole huge system of sacrifices. If active ministers, like Gladden and Munger, were scarcely to be held sharply to a requirement of acquaintance with the last results of scholarship, buried as they were in a foreign language, no such allowance can be made for the ignorance of professed theological scholars, or, if they were not ignorant, for their failure to bring forward what they knew and what they thought about it. Perhaps they were merely too incurably conservative. Whether such a judgment is too severe or not, the pitiless logic of facts quietly swept the propounders of such a new theology as Andover had to offer aside, and the great current of investi-

gation and discovery went on, neither helped by them nor hindered.

One prophetic suggestion the Andover theologians did, however, make by the emphasis which they laid upon the "Christian consciousness," which we shall see taken up by another, and shall have occasion to refer to again and again.

The liberal movement had thus begun with an attack upon the most vulnerable point of the old system; but the conservatism and hesitation which we shall have occasion to note again and again, prevented the liberals from carrying that attack to a complete victory. It is certainly a mark of great dogmatic weakness that the new thinkers, as well as the old, never made thorough work of an application of the doctrine of the love of God to eschatology. This is the more remarkable since modern ideas of the purpose of punishment in the State, emphasizing the aim of restoring the criminal to society as a man fit to be a member of it and to enjoy its privileges, were already before the public. We are therefore not to regard this period of our history as completely successful in its work. It began, but it left the completion of its work to a later time.

A number of younger men were, however, swept for a time into the Andover current, among whom was Newman Smyth, a younger brother of Professor Egbert C. Smyth, who, while pastor of a Presbyterian church in Illinois, wrote three books which brought him the election to succeed Professor Park at Andover, which the Visitors of the institution refused to confirm. These early books, the first of a considerable line of important contributions to our thinking, revealed the essential characteristics of Dr. Smyth's mind: a strong and sometimes dominant conservation of temper, joined with a great passion for truth, and a thorough belief in the truth of the new positions to which the careful study of the modern days was bringing unprejudiced thinkers.

The first of these three books was *The Religious Feeling* (1877). It was an attempt to draw from Schleiermacher's sug-

gestion of the religious feeling help in meeting the religious question of its day, which was no superficial one, as Dr. Smyth conceived it, but "a question of the very life of religion itself, a question between any theology and no theology." [25] With "half-way solutions or compromises" he has little sympathy. "Equally hopeless" was it "for believers in the Bible and the Holy Ghost to seek to subdue the questions uprising in many quarters against the traditional faith by clinging to antiquated methods of thought, or by standing still, marking time, in lines of defence which have been already completely turned." The great question of the times is, "Are we capable of coming to a knowledge of God, even if there is a God? Can He *touch* us, and we *feel* him?" and the answer given is, like Schleiermacher's that we may have a consciousness of God. I have not observed this phrase in the book, although Schleiermacher is distinct in designating his "feeling of dependence" as a *Gottesbewusstsein;* but such is evidently Smyth's meaning.[26]

Whether such a use of the word *consciousness* is correct or not, Schleiermacher rendered a great service to theology as a science in vindicating for it an independent place and sphere as an interpretation of the religious experience. And this book of Dr. Smyth's served a valuable purpose in adding depth, feeling, and life to a theology in danger of growing mechanical and dry. It also contains a steady controversy with agnostics and materialists, and is, in fact, an essay in Christian apologetics. There was at one point an attempt to sound philosophical depths, in maintaining "that the religious feeling involves perception, and is, therefore, the valid source of theology," and in adding to this statement the further one "that the ideas gained . . . through the feeling of absolute dependence are the conditions of all ordered, or scientific knowledge." [27] He here identifies sensation, through which "our knowledge of the external world is given," [28] with the feeling of dependence, since this is an "inward *sensation*" with an "accompanying *intuition* of the Divine being and presence." And he plunges into still deeper waters in the following passage:

"[We must] trace the relation, so far as we may, between the religious feeling and its intuitions. That the intuitions are constant ideas, in all minds the same, is unquestionable. All men think from these fixed starting-points. They are the axioms of common sense, as well as the first principles of science. One of these fixed points of light in our mental firmament is the idea of cause. What, then, is the relation between the idea of cause and the religious feeling? We feel ourselves to be dependent beings, and we at once think of ourselves as caused beings. We become aware of ourselves as limited or finite, and immediately perceive ourselves to have been made. The sense of dependence, that is to say, immediately and uniformly is converted in thought into the idea of cause and effect. There is no intermediate process, or course of reflection, between the feeling of dependence and the idea of cause. The latter is the mental translation of the former, spontaneous and necessary, as is the translation of sensation into the perception of an external world. *The idea of cause, coming forth directly from the feeling of dependence, becomes at once a law of thought,* and it conditions all subsequent experience." [29]

The second book of this group was *Old Faiths in New Light* (1879).[30] There ran through it, as the author stated when he came to reissue it in a second edition "three constructive principles, viz., an evolutionary science of nature, an educational philosophy of history, and a metaphysical faith in the spiritual unity of creation." [31] His acceptance of evolution was cordial and full, although he resisted its Spencerian form and all the materialistic interpretations which were in these early days more freely given to it than they are now. He went as far, perhaps, as he could be expected to go at this time, particularly when we call to mind the strong conservative temper of his mind, which we shall have further occasion to remark. He went so far as to accept the application of evolutionary conceptions to the study of the origin of the Biblical books, although not extending such studies to the New Testament books, the Fourth Gospel remaining in his mind entirely historical, and verbally literal in its rendering of Jesus' discourses.[32] In the sphere of Old Testament criticism his position is still decidedly conservative, for he holds to the historicity of Abra-

ham,[33] and ascribes much to the Law of Moses.[34] He consequently holds, theoretically, to a progressive revelation in the Scriptures, and perhaps would have been not greatly averse to the definition of the Bible as a *record* of the progressive revelation of God to His people; but such views had little practical influence upon his interpretation and use of Scripture passages or the positions which he finally takes. The miraculous element in the Bible he accepts without question.[35] A chapter, prophetic of Dr. Smyth's latest labours, on "the growth of knowledge and [the] scientific tendency of the Bible," is very fresh and suggestive, although distinctly apologetic in its attitude rather than constructive.[36] The "Mosaic account of creation" is "singularly free from the mythological and superstitious conceptions of nature prevalent in antiquity." "The inspired writers possessed, in a surprising degree, a second essential habit of mind—that of accurate observation of natural phenomena." With the exception of a poetic phrase or two, and the common reference to the rising and setting of the sun, there are no accommodations to the erroneous conceptions of natural objects common in classical speech. There are no uncouth forms, half animal and half human, in the Biblical nomenclature, like the Assyrian man-bulls. And, particularly, the account of creation in the first chapter of *Genesis* is defended, perhaps with overminute anxiety, as helpful to science in declaring the spiritual origin of all material phenomena, and referring three points in creative activity to God, the creation of the heaven and the earth, the springing up of life on the earth, and the birth of the soul of man. Two chapters on Christ as the "culmination," one on the completion of the unfinished world, and one on the Resurrection, complete the book.

The third of these books was *The Orthodox Theology of To-day* (1881). This book had the disadvantage of Presbyterian origin, and a portion of it is occupied with a discussion of the propriety of subscribing to an official creed while at the same time repudiating its characteristic doctrines. Such discussions are inevitable in a progressing age in churches, like the Presbyterian and Episcopal, where definite creeds form a part of

the system of safeguards protecting the purity of the ministry. To Congregationalists, who have never been held to any such subscription, they seem a great deal like "letting your conversation be Yea, Nay," and unsuccessful in removing the appearance, and hence the fact, of double dealing in a matter of simple veracity.[37] But in reference to the doctrines themselves, the book breathes a liberal note, contending for the essentially moral interpretation of the nature of God, defending the Atonement on the ground that suffering is indissolubly connected with forgiveness, rejecting such theories of the future as annihilationism the defending true immortality in several aspects, and especially as "social" immortality, as considerable length. It is an apology, a defence of the great positions of the New England theology on the fundamental questions of Christian doctrine.

Dr. Smyth was naturally led to take some part in the Andover controversies. He prepared an edition in English of Dorner's *Eschatology,*[38] which was the source of the Andover "hypothesis" as to a continued probation (1883). He did not yield an entire acquiescense in Dorner's views, but commended the "larger liberty of discussion" found there. And, back in a Congregational pastorate (First Church, New Haven), he wrote:

> "I may express a feeling of personal thankfulness that I have been born and reared in a religious denomination which has repeatedly shown, and that, too, with an emphasis increasing with every new occasion for it, that with us the Word of God is not bound, and that our chosen method is to preserve faith through liberty." [39]

It is not without suggestions of a possible lack of sympathy on Dr. Smyth's part with the pace at which change on our doctrinal positions was going on, that we note that he did not engage further in the public discussions of what is styled "revealed" theology, but from this time devoted himself to "natural" theology. We shall have occasion to return to a consideration of his work in this field at a later point in our history.

In the year 1892 he issued a volume on *Christian Ethics*. This subject lies a little aside from the present study, and affords nothing which might be said to differ, except in point of emphasis, or proportion, or perhaps in source of material, from the traditional teaching in our churches since Jonathan Edwards. But it contains a good deal of discussion of contributory topics, of the Scriptural teachings, of the Scriptures themselves, which is helpful in liberalizing the thinking of one who follows it, though not without an emphasis on the Church and the common religious consciousness which is not merely conservative but distinctly reactionary.[40] It seems rather alien to Dr. Smyth's true position when he condemns sharply the rationalizing method of the Edwardian line,[41] with which, rather than with the Andover "historical" tendencies, his later work is affiliated. On the whole, Dr. Smyth illustrates how difficult it was for even able thinkers to cut loose from the influences which had produced what they were compelled to reject, and how the past laid its paralysing hand upon many of the departments of their thought.

Altogether, there has now appeared among men of a liberal mind and disposed to adapt their thinking to the times in which they live a man of large and increasing scholarship—we may say the first of adequate scholarship for the task of criticism and reconstruction. Will his critical and progressive or his conservative and reactionary tendencies prove the stronger? Upon the answer to this question the value of his work will ultimately depend.

REFERENCES

1. F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology*, p. 190 ff.
2. James M. Whiton, *Is Eternal Punishment Endless?*, p. viii f.
3. F. H. Foster, "'Is Eternal Punishment Endless?'," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1878, p. 353 ff.
4. *The Congregationalist*, 1877, p. 364.
5. Washington Gladden, *Recollections*, p. 73.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 224 f.

8. Washington Gladden, *Was Bronson Alcott's School a Type of God's Moral Government?*, p. 62.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
12. George A. Gordon gives a very appreciative estimate of Munger in his own autobiography, *My Education and Religion,* Ch. XXI.
13. F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology,* p. 404 ff.
14. Pres. Hopkins so expressed himself. *The Congregationalist,* 1877, p. 409.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
16. F. H. Foster, *op. cit.*, pp. 278 ff, 300 f, 307, 496 ff, 501.
17. For example, in the introduction to the volume *Progressive Orthodoxy,* p. 7 ff. "The church settles its rule of faith"—that has a very musty smell.
18. *Progressive Orthodoxy,* p. 241.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 109 ff.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 241 *et mul. al.* F. H. Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 258 ff.
23. *Progressive Orthodoxy,* p. 241.
24. I have already referred to p. 7 in *Progressive Orthodoxy,* the whole of which breathes this spirit. I add here, as a few passages of the same nature, pp. 237, line 24 ff; 256, 17 ff; 2, 30, f; 6, 23 ff; 8, 18, "the church," as elsewhere frequently; 11, 14 ff.
25. Newman Smyth, *The Religious Feeling,* p. 10.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 21, 33, 41, *etc.*
27. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 119 f. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
30. We have been compelled to use the second edition of this book (1887) in this study. The text is however substantially unchanged.
31. Newman Smyth, *Old Faiths in New Light* (second edition, 1887), p. vii.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 218 *et al.*
33. *Ibid.*, p. 96 ff.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 75 *et al.*
35. Compare p. 350 ff.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 128 ff.
37. In *The Meaning of Personal Life,* p. 211, he defends the repetition in the creed, of the phrase "born of the Virgin Mary," while not believing it. This will seem, in spite of what Dr. Smyth says in its defence, to the unsophisticated mind plump dishonesty. It is a pity that he could lend himself to such miserable sophistries.
38. Sharply reviewed for minute errors in German scholarship by W. H. Cobb in the *Bibliotheca Sacra,* 1883, p. 374 ff.
39. Newman Smyth, *Dorner on the Future State,* p. 43 f.
40. See the whole chapter on "The Relation of Scripture and Faith," p. 71 ff.
41. *Ibid.* Note also the remark on Martineau, p. 75,

III

THE RECEPTION OF EVOLUTION BY THEOLOGIANS

IN STRICT accordance with its own principles, the appearance of evolution on the theological stage and the perception of its importance for the philosophy of religion was a very gradual affair. *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859. It arrived in America on the eve of the Civil War, and for several years seems to have attracted little attention from the church. The minds of men were too much occupied with the great struggle and its consequents till about 1870 to give much attention to a new theory in science. But after this date the discussion broke out and soon became eager. And the first impression of religious men was generally against it, and that with a large degree of emphasis. It was some time before they were prepared for beginning the discussion in such a way as to afford any great promise of arriving at permanent results.

And yet, had men been less preoccupied, they would have had the opportunity of being introduced to the consideration of the theory in the most favourable way. Professor Asa Gray, the distinguished botanist of Harvard University, had been for several years in correspondence with Mr. Darwin and was well acquainted with the progress and tendency of his investigations.[1] He was, as he must have been from his great interest in biological study, intensely interested in the purely scientific aspects of the theory; but he was also, as he said of himself later, "philosophically a convinced theist, and religiously an acceptor of the 'creed commonly called the Nicene' as the exponent of the Christian faith." [2] He was, in fact, a member of the First Church in Cambridge (Congregational). He was thus peculiarly qualified to discuss the new theory dispassionately, and to explain it with reference to its bearings on the philosophy of religion, in a manner to assist theological think-

ers in quickly adjusting themselves to it. But, unfortunately, they could not for the time attend. Men of science were also slow in following his lead.

From the standpoint of the present time, how complete and convincing, and how tactful and conciliatory, was his handling of his difficult problem! He was also prompt. Darwin's book appeared late in November, 1859. Professor Gray sat down at once to review it, and published his article in March, 1860. He discusses it as making a proposal in a sphere where something was needed and judges it on its merits as an argument. He does not agree with Darwin in every respect, but he later said that "the new hypothesis has grown upon our favour as we proceeded." [3] With the scientific side of his discussion we need not now concern ourselves, for he also took up the question which immediately suggested itself to the religious thinker, and, almost before such a one had spoken a word, he vindicated design in nature as not inconsistent with indirect attainment, and so anticipated and answered, in such a way as fully to cover the case, the objection that evolution destroyed design and so dispensed with the necessity of believing in God, and was thus atheistic.

It is obviously impossible for us to follow Dr. Gray's discussions with any degree of minuteness in such a volume as the present. He devoted four other articles during the year 1860 to Darwinism, paying particular attention to the argument from design. They were not the work of one ignorant of philosophical reasoning, evidences of which may be found on every page. One of them discusses Design versus Necessity in the form of a dialogue, where no one, certainly, will deny that he permitted his antagonist to state his arguments in their full strength.

"*Design* [he says] can never be *demonstrated*. Witnessing the act does not make known the *design*. . . . The word of the actor is not proof. . . . The only way left, and the only possible way in cases where testimony is out of the question, is to infer the design from the result, or from arrangements which strike us as *adapted* or *intended* to produce a certain result, which affords a presumption of

design. The strength of the presumption may be zero, or an even chance, . . . but the probability of design will increase with the particularity of the act, the specialty of the arrangement or machinery, and with the number of identical or yet more of similar and analogous instances, until it rises to a moral certainty—i.e., to a conviction which practically we are as unable to resist as we are to deny the cogency of a mathematical demonstration." [4]

One cannot exaggerate the value of this work of Professor Gray's. He pursued it through a series of thirteen articles, which were collected in 1876 in the volume called *Darwiniana,* where it may be thoroughly studied. In the concluding article in this book he expresses his

"sense of the great gain to science from his [Darwin's] having brought back teleology to natural history. In Darwinism, usefulness and purpose come to the front again as working principles of the first order; *upon them, indeed, the whole system rests.*" [5]

And he summarizes the whole in the sentence: "The tradition of the Divine in nature, testified to by Aristotle, comes down to our day with undiminished value." [6]

Thus a scholar, who was probably the most competent man in America, upon the whole, to understand and explain the Darwinian theory, took pains at the beginning to remove from the theologians' way the stumbling-blocks which might prevent their gaining the instruction which this new view of God's methods in His world was able to afford them.

At first, however, the mass of theologians did nothing with it at all. Those who did do something, generally waived it aside as a passing theory, of which, as Luthardt said in Leipzig as late as 1880, "in ten years more you will hear nothing more of it!" But the scientific world,—at first by no means unanimous in accepting it, as the great examples, Agassiz and Dawson, prove,—were passing, one by one, over into the Darwinian camp. Here and there a solitary theologian was seeing the light. The Rev. George Frederick Wright, destined to be eminent as an investigator and writer on glacial geology,

early gave a qualified adhesion to Darwinism, and later assisted Professor Gray in issuing his *Darwiniana*. President Hitchcock of Amherst College wrote in 1863 strongly against the theory, saying that, according to it, "the process is started and carried on from stage to stage without the aid or need of a Deity," [7] charging it with leading inevitably to the grossest materialism and destroying immortality, human responsibility to God, and the doctrine of an incarnate Redeemer. The same years, J. M. Manning speaks of Darwinism [8] rather contemptuously. It is "imaginative as to its data and hypothetical in its reasoning," "irreconcileably at war with some of the . . . surest discoveries of science . . . a *wild hypothesis,* dependent altogether on perverse and special pleading!" On the other hand, Professor P. A. Chadbourne, later president of Williams College, wrote in 1864, "We do not see the atheistic tendency of the . . . development theory at all. . . . We welcome all the labors of the development theorists and feel thankful for them. We welcome them as contributions to science. We never read a more convincing work on natural theology than Darwin's book on the fertilization of orchids." [9] But, after all, there was as yet little attention to spare for such discussions. *The Baptist Quarterly* begins its series of articles on evolution as late as 1868, and is thus, with many other publications beginning about this date, an indication of the rising of a wave of alarm in the churches as the tide of acceptance of the theory among scientific men was beginning to run very fast. Baptists are, perhaps more than most evangelical divines, likely to be candid in the treatment of such a topic as evolution. And while the general conclusion of the writers is unfavourable to Darwinism, the tone of the discussion is calm and judicial. Heman Lincoln writes in 1868 most unfavourably of them all. "It is supported by no facts pertinent and well established," a favourite note among later opponents, almost a "slogan" of the opposition. "The few facts cited in support of the theory are not only irrelevant, but when rightly interpreted are fatal to it." Yet he rallies enough friendliness to write: "We concede

that it may . . . claim attention as an ingenious hypothesis which in a future day may possibly unfold into a well defined law." But he closes the whole with the sentence: "Such an hypothesis . . . is not tenable." [10] C. E. Hamlin, in 1871, thinks it "an uncertain speculation." [11] C. Nisbet, in 1872, does not think the theory conflicts with Scripture, but finally decides that it is not a probable hypothesis.[12] L. E. Hicks, in 1873, says that "Christian scientists and theologians who have faith in science do not disagree at all." [13] He here hints at one of the great reasons for the dullness of the theologians in this discussion, which was their ignorance of science. No American colleges during the time when these men were educated had any competent instruction in the sciences and, above all, laboratories and personal experimentation by students were totally unknown. The some disability is to be noted in too many of our American ministers to-day, and for the same reason. They come mostly from small colleges, and these have generally had no adequate equipment for scientific instruction. S. H. Carpenter, in 1874, wrote in no hostile temper, but finally said: "We claim that those material forms are brought into such relation [viz., the evolutional] by intellectual evolution and not by physical genesis; that they represent an evolution of thought and not an evolution of matter." [14] So far *The Baptist Quarterly*. But *The Methodist Quarterly,* from 1860 to 1880, has no single attempt at a discussion of any theological or scientific bearings of Darwin's work! One Methodist, however, Professor William North Rice of Wesleyan University, wrote an article in *The New Englander* in 1867, which, though pronouncing against Darwinism in favour of Dana's theory of the special creation of species (he had been a pupil of Dana's at Yale), contained a strong and important message to the church, unfortunately too little attended to. He wrote: "We must protest against the course which theological writers on Darwinism have usually taken. . . . It is the spirit of the Inquisition which seeks to terrify the student of science by the cry of heresy." [15] And later:

"The whole history of philosophy—the shameful retreat from point to point after each vain endeavour to check the progress of science—the noble minds who after each scientific discovery have been led to reject the faith which its recognized expounders had founded on scientific error—driven into infidelity not by the supposed infidel tendencies of science, but by the folly of Christian teachers—ought long ago to have taught the lesson which the Church seems still so slow to learn. For the sake of religion as well as of science, let scientific questions be discussed and settled on purely scientific grounds. Theology may then use the results of scientific research to illustrate and enforce the truths of religion." [16]

Of this preliminary discussion, which resembles a skirmish, we note but one or two more names before passing to the grand battle of the ecclesiastical giants. Dr. A. P. Peabody of Harvard University, in his *Christianity the Religion of Nature,* in 1863, had apparently not given much consideration to Darwinism, for he writes in one place, "The first man, the first elephant, the first bird, the first tree, was a miracle." [17] But the following year he has an article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* which is thoroughly friendly to Darwinism, refusing to admit that it in any way endangers Christian truth. And Professor Frederick Gardiner, of the Berkeley Divinity School, in the same review for 1872, writes of Darwinism that "theologically it does not touch upon the fact of creation," but it does "not rest upon positive evidence." [18] One sometimes wonders where some of these writers got their definition of evidence!

But now the grand battle was joined, and we may select as a general date to be assigned to it the year 1874. It was in this year that Professor Charles Hodge of Princeton delivered what he intended should be the annihilating blow. But two years earlier Professor Randolph S. Foster, later Methodist Episcopal Bishop, had attempted this annihilation. It was in the orotund and declamatory style, and showed no gleam of real understanding of the meaning or force of Darwin's arguments. All that had been done by previous writers, like Lamarck, to introduce the theory he viewed as complete failure. "The wave

passed by and left no ripple marks." [19] Huxley's statement that he was not a materialist, Foster takes as a self-refutation, without the least suspicion that he might have failed to understand Huxley. As to evolution in general, he distinguishes three schools,—materialistic, semimaterialistic, and theistic. The first is atheistic, the second, theistic in its view of the origin of life, atheistic in its view of evolution, the third attempts theism but substantially fails. However, he says of the last: "Its boldness fascinates us. . . . We neither accept nor reject it. . . . Neither its truth nor falseness is of consequence to our Christian faith." [20] He concentrates his attention on the second view, which he regards with abhorrence. This theory is Darwinism. His substantial argument against it is "no proof." He demands for this "proof" the exhibition of intermediate links between the lower animals and man. His worst failure is the failure to grasp the force of the scientific argument, arising, no doubt, from his entire lack of sufficient scientific training; but the public certainly had a right to demand that any one coming forward to instruct it on so important a theme should be able to distinguish between probable and demonstrative reasoning. For this he generally substitutes declamation. What shall be said of such sentences as these: "Some future pup, Newfoundland or terrier, in the infinite ages, may [according to Darwinism] write the *Paradise Lost*." "Therefore a pig is an incipient mathematician." [21] Foster was no worse, to be sure, than President F. A. P. Barnard, who spoke thus:

> "Much as I love truth in the abstract, I love my hope of immortality more. . . . If this, after all, is the best that science can give me, then I pray, No more science. Let me live in my simple ignorance as my fathers lived before me; and when I shall at length be summoned to my final repose, let me still be able to fold the drapery of my couch about me and lie down to pleasant, even though they be deceitful, dreams." [22]

It is greatly to the credit of Drew Theological Seminary, in which Dr. Foster was professor, that the year after his "Ingham Lectures," Alexander Winchell, whose name is chiefly

connected with the University of Michigan, but who was at this time Chancellor of the Methodist University of Syracuse, was invited to lecture at Drew. After a thorough consideration of evolution, its pros and its cons, he comes to the theistic bearings of the doctrine. He says: "That any form of evolutionary doctrine now current in the world is compatible with the devout recognition of the being and providence of God, we hope to be able to demonstrate." He maintains that "the organism of the universe is not eternal and demands a power superior to itself to originate and conserve it." He teaches the doctrine of an immanent God, though nowhere, as far as noted, using that term. "We sometimes speak of . . . energies residing in matter and inherent in it and acting without intelligence or volition; but a close examination reveals the unphilosophical character of such conceptions. There is not a shadow of evidence that active force is or can be an attribute of matter." "It is God's present power and volition which draws the apple to the ground and balances the planet in its orbit." [23]

How thoroughgoing Winchell's acceptance of Darwinism was, may be seen from a longer and continuous quotation.

After saying that to accept evolution would not be to subvert any fundamental doctrine of the Scriptures because, first, their authority has been established, and, second, their utterances must therefore harmonize with any other utterances of God's truth, i.e. with those of genuine science, he proceeds as follows:

"But we do not rely solely upon these abstract, deductive propositions. We bring the specific points of comparison directly into the light of investigation and demand, what must follow from the established fact, that the admitted developmental succession of organic types has been realized through the operation of secondary causes. When we look the problem squarely in the face we smile in amazement that it has seemed necessary to propound it. Is it less credible that man as a species should have been developed, by secondary causes, from an ape, than that by such means man as an individual should rise from a new-born babe or a primitive ovum? It is no more derogatory to man's dignity to have been, at some former period, an ape than to have been that red lump of mere flesh which

we call a human infant. And if the means by which the babe has developed into a man do not, to the common mind, seem to exclude deity from the process, why should we feel that deity is necessarily excluded from a similar process in leading man up from the monkey? No reason can be assigned. If you say that the babe is the man in potentiality, so it may be replied that the monkey is the man in potentiality—and so the quadruped, the reptile, or the fish. It does not exclude divine agency from the work of organic advancement to assume that it has been effected through the reproductive and other physiological processes. The Creator no less made man if he caused him to be derived by descent from an orang-outang. Man's structural organism stands in a relation of affinity to that of the monkey, which is rendered no more intimate or absolute by the admission that they belong to the same genealogical tree; and man's intellectual and moral superiority is just as emphatic and distinguishing, and just as much a divine inbreathing, as if it were the crowning grace of an organism which could not illustrate one plan and one intelligence in the whole creation. If specific types came into being derivately, the utmost that can be said is that this was the divine method of creating."

But he goes further than this. He continues:—

"We cannot logically hesitate to entertain similar views in reference to the hypothesis of spontaneous generation, or, more accurately, of archegenesis. Shall it be proven that organization comes forth from certain forms and conditions of dead matter, we shall simply say that this is the divine method of creating. And when we can finally look upon the living, conscious, moving being rising above the horizon of existence, we shall feel awed at the spectacle, and acknowledge ourselves brought into the nearer, visible presence of creative Divinity." [24]

However these brave words may have been received at Drew, Winchell had yet "also to suffer for the sake" of his convictions. From the year 1875 to 1878 he held a position in Vanderbilt University, but at last he was taken to task for his teachings by a Methodist bishop, and "his advocacy of the theory of evolution met with the disapproval of the authorities of the Methodist church and led to his dismissal from Van-

derbilt." [25] The noble protest of the young Professor Rice had not yet been heeded.

It was at this point that Dr. Hodge entered the contest. It was no unimportant event. He was the leading professor of theology in the Presbyterian church, greatly admired and revered, a controversialist of large experience and many victories. Whether he was specially fitted for this particular controversy may be doubted. It was his boast, at the fiftieth anniversary of his professorship in 1872, that during his time, whether this were creditable to the institution or discreditable, no original idea had been propounded at Princeton. His *Systematic Theology,* published in 1871, had given him, if possible, an increase of influence in his own church and throughout Protestantism. It has been stlyed "the greatest system of dogmatics in our language." It is simply the transfer to English of the system of Calvin and Turretin. Thus Dr. Hodge was not a man to entertain new ideas, and it may be doubted if he was capable of understanding them. Age had added its disabling influence, for he was now seventy-seven years old. But all this did little to diminish his prestige. He had vigorously repelled the influence which Congregationalism, under the "Plan of Union," was gaining over Presbyterianism in both theology and polity during the years 1801 to 1838, denouncing the New England Theology as "Pelagian" and the Congregational polity as divisive and destructive of pure Presbyterianism. The survivors of the 3,000 Presbyterian ministers who had passed under his instruction would be likely to follow his lead. He was looked to to speak the decisive word; and he intended to do it. And so in 1874 he sent out his book, *What Is Darwinism?* [26]

Dr. Hodge's methods in controversy were the consequence of his intention to strike error at its vital points, to refute its real and characteristic positions. Minor considerations he paid little attention to. When his attention had been called to certain misrepresentations of Mr. Finney's views in the course of the preparation of his *Systematic Theology,* he had refused to correct them. Mr. Finney had modified certain formulations

of doctrine in deference to criticisms which Dr. Hodge had made upon them, which he thought were justified. But Dr. Hodge did not think it worth while to acknowledge these concessions, because, it may be supposed, he did not think that the substance of his objections was met. He meant to crush: he did not care to win. Perhaps less of this spirit is to be seen in his attack upon Darwinism. There are evidences throughout of a desire to be fair and even generous. At one point he expresses the desire that his book might prove an *irenicon*. He notes the fact that Mr. Darwin was a theist.[27] But he substantially misquotes Darwin when he inserts explanatory phrases in quotations without indicating them as such, as for example in this: "The grand conclusion is 'Man (body, soul, and spirit) is descended from a hairy quadruped,' " etc.[28] He summarizes Darwin's position in sentences which Darwin would repudiate, as, for example, "In using the expression Natural Selection Mr. Darwin intends to exclude design, or final causes." [29] Or again, "What Darwin and the advocates of his theory deny is all design. The organs, even the most complicated and wonderful, were not intended. They are said to be due to the undirected and unintended operation of physical laws." [30] Compare with this flat statement, Professor Chadbourne's remark about *The Fertilization of Orchids*. Or this from Darwin himself: "The birth both of the [human] species and of the individual are equally parts of that grand sequence of events *which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance*. The understanding revolts at such a conclusion." [31] And, in general, Hodge constantly pushes his opponent too hard, forcing meanings upon his expressions which Darwin would not have admitted. For example, "Not intentional . . . is precisely what Darwin means when he says that species arise out of accidental variations." [32] This was because Darwin confessed ignorance as to the causes of variation. Of course he meant "secondary causes." Hodge understood him to mean *all causes*. So he says again: Darwin's" whole book is an argument against teleology." How could he say this with *The Fertilization of Orchids* before him? Or with Gray's discussions? His dispo-

sition to seize upon everything he thought would count against Darwin, and his blindness because of this overmastering anxiety to crush the head of the evolutionary serpent is seen in the following:

"When the theory of evolution was propounded in 1844 . . . it was universally rejected; when proposed by Mr. Darwin less than twenty years afterward, it was received with acclamation. Why is this? The facts are now what they were then. They were as well known then as they are now." [33]

The last sentence is, of course, absolutely untrue. He is fairly fretful in the following:

"Why doesn't he *say* they [the complicated organs of plants and animals] are the product of divine intelligence? *If God made them, it makes no difference,* so far as the question of design is concerned, *how He made them: whether at once or by a process of evolution.* But instead of referring them to the purpose of God, he laboriously endeavours to prove that they may be accounted for without any design or purpose whatever." [34]

Hodge and Darwin are here pretty nearly together. And still nearer, if Dr. Hodge only knew it, when he says that his own "doctrine does not ignore the efficiency of second causes; it simply asserts that God overrules and controls them." [35] Darwin does not always, though he does sometimes, bring the last cause out in definite expression, and confines his attention, as a man of science must, to the first; but he does not deny the last anywhere. Dr. Hodge's great difficulty is that he does not understand the purpose and standpoint of science. He thinks that the scientist ought to be thinking constantly of what is always in the mind of the theologian, God and His Agency. If Mr. Darwin had only put his theories into Dr. Hodge's language, the latter would have been ready to accept them, for evidently, if he thought that God's causation was clearly expressed, he was indifferent to scientific theories as such. We get the angle of Dr. Hodges' approach to the subject from the following:

"On that theory [the denial of final causes and the assertion that God has left the universe to the control of unintelligent physical causes] there have been no supernatural revelation, no miracles; Christ has not risen, and we are yet in our sins. . . . The Christians of Germany say that the only alternative these theories leave us is Heathenism or Christianity." [36]

But this refutation of any view by its consequences is both cheap and undiscriminating. We must follow the truth, accepting what light we have, and expecting that finally all truth will be found to be harmonious. It was just possible that Dr. Hodge, and Princeton, and Presbyterianism, and the Westminster Confession might, after all, not be infallible; and if so, their only hope of holding their place in the future was *docility,* of which virtue Dr. Hodge had not a spark! How different, and how noble in the contrast, are the words of Darwin: "We are not . . . concerned with hopes or fears, *only with the truth* as far as our reason permits us to discover it; and I have given the evidence to the best of my ability." [37]

The outcome of Dr. Hodge's book was this:

"The conclusion of the whole matter is that the denial of design in nature is virtually the denial of God. Mr. Darwin's theory does deny all design in nature, therefore his theory is virtually atheistical; his theory, not . . . himself. He believes in a Creator." [38]

Or as he puts it upon his last pages:

"What is Darwinism? It is Atheism." [39]

The final blunt epigram had a vast influence. Multitudes who had never read Darwin got this verdict upon evolution, and the impression was widely spread among pious people, and still remains in whole denominations of Christians, that evolution is the great enemy of Christianity. In one respect they are right, and Dr. Hodge's fears were justified, for evolution is already making an end of an untrue and now antiquated interpretation of Christianity.

Dr. Hodge's attack on evolution was re-enforced by the appearance of Principal J. W. Dawson, of McGill College, Mont-

real, who delivered in New York in the year 1874, lectures upon "The Bible and Science." [40] He had, at a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance the previous year, in answer to a question of Dr. Hodge who had asked, after a statement of his own position, "Am I right?", replied that Darwinism leads "logically to that conclusion," viz., Hodge's conclusion. He now opposed that form of evolution which confines the causation of the world to secondary causes and rejects the idea of God. Consequently he objects to Huxley and Tyndall more than to Darwin; and while not accepting Darwin's results entirely, is not absolutely hostile to him, and even says that "the question of the derivation of one species from another is of secondary importance." But the following year (1875) a book was issued, apparently a report of these lectures, designating the Darwinian hypothesis as "a harmless toy for philosophical biologists to play with until they can obtain *some basis of facts* upon which to explain the origin of species." [41] He also maintained the entire scientific accuracy of the narrative of creation in *Genesis* first. Throughout a long career and numerous publications he adhered to these positions.

Professor Asa Gray immediately reviewed Hodge and again took up the question of the consistency of the idea of creation with that of operation through second causes—all unnecessary except as every new occasion in controversy demands much repetition of old arguments.[42] Incidentally, we may repeat here a quotation which he makes from one of Canon Kingsley's sermons in Westminster Abbey, in which that valiant, free, and courageous soul said:

> "But if it be said . . . 'The doctrine of evolution, by doing away with the theory of creation, does away with that of final causes,' let us answer boldly, 'Not in the least.' We might accept all that Mr. Darwin, all that Professor Huxley, all that other most able men have so learnedly and acutely written on physical science, and yet preserve our natural theology upon the same basis as that on which Butler and Paley left it. That we should have to develop it, I do not deny." [43]

John Fiske, by parentage and early training a Congregationalist, gained a reputation as a dangerous radical in consequence of his modernness of mind and readiness to accept the contributions of scientific thought to the philosophy of religion. He was even thought while a student in Harvard College to exercise an injurious religious influence upon his fellow students and barely escaped expulsion. It was impossible for President Eliot to give him the position on the Harvard Faculty which his great talents and extraordinary scholarship deserved. But he did some lecturing there and in 1874 published one of his courses under the title of *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy,* in which he appeared as an evolutionist and a Spencerian and which led to his classification by most people among the "materialists." But he was badly misunderstood. He ultimately issued a series of thin volumes—*Through Nature to God, The Idea of God,* and *The Destiny of Man,* which were at once recognized as thoroughly theistic and an important contribution to current discussions; but in *The Idea of God* he wrote: "In my *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy,* published in 1874, I endeavoured to set forth a theory of theism identical with that which is set forth in the present essay." [44] That is, he had always been a theist, though always believing the forms of theism current before the appearance of Darwinism untenable.

It was not, then, as an "atheist" or a "materialist" that in an essay of the year 1874 [45] he took up the theological bearings of evolution. He writes:

"Darwinism may convince us that the existence of highly complicated organisms is the result of an infinitely diversified aggregate of circumstances so minute as severally to seem trivial or accidental; yet the consistent theist will always occupy an impregnable position in maintaining that the entire series in each and every one of its incidents is an immediate manifestation of the creative action of God."

And he continues, "Setting aside, then, the theological criticism as irrelevant to the question etc.," thus indicating his thought that Dr. Hodge had no occasion to talk about the merits of Darwinism at all!

In his *Idea of God,* Mr. Fiske adds:

"In *Cosmic Philosophy* I argue that the presence of God is the one all-pervading fact of life from which there is no escape; that while in the deepest sense the nature of Deity is unknown by finite Man, nevertheless the exigencies of our thinking oblige us to symbolize that nature in some form that has a real meaning for us; and that we cannot symbolize that nature as in any wise physical, but are bound to symbolize it as in some way physical." [46]

And later:

"The world was made for Man, . . . and the bringing forth in him of those qualities which we call highest and holiest is *the final cause of creation.* . . . 'The process of evolution is itself the working out a degree of Teleology of which our finite understandings can fathom but the scantiest rudiments.' . . . Our belief in what we call the evidence of our senses is less strong than our faith that in the orderly sequence of events there is a meaning which our minds could fathom, were they only vast enough." [47]

Thus the influence of one of our greatest thinkers was cast upon the side of evolution, without loss, in his own mind, to the theistic position. No doubt this influence was greatly modified, and often completely nullified, to minds incapable of adjusting themselves to a new conception of God, whom they thought they "knew," and really living in the atmosphere of theories which viewed Him as the "great Architect" of the universe, a God outside of the universe acting upon it as material, and somewhat intractable too, as a carpenter makes a bench. But Fiske was finally to become a very potent influence in the development of the liberal movement.

It was of more immediate importance that Dr. James McCosh, President of Princeton College, long known in Ireland and America as a doughty champion of philosophical orthodoxy, should appear as, on the whole, decidedly favourable to Darwinism. In his *The Development Hypothesis: Is it Sufficient?* he emphasizes final cause in nature, says that "the doctrine of development does not undermine or in any way in-

terfere with the argument from design," [48] quotes Murphy on the necessity that different parts of an organism should modify under evolution *together,* if the organ were to function and thus give advantage in the struggle for existence, thus anticipating the position so powerfully set forth by Bergson,[49] etc. The whole tone of the work is sufficiently set forth in the following sentence:

"It is useless to tell the younger naturalists that there is no truth in the doctrine of development; for they know that there is truth, which is not to be set aside by denunciation. Religious philosophers might have been more profitably employed in showing them the religious aspects of the doctrine of development; and some would be grateful to any who would help them to keep their old faith in God and the Bible with their new faith in science." [50]

The influence of Henry Ward Beecher was finally decisively cast (1885) in favour of evolution, and from that time on the tendency among Congregationalists to accept evolution was greatly strengthened.[51] In the following year, Noah Porter, President of Yale, who, in his treatise upon the *Human Intellect,* had been decidedly hostile to evolution,[52] gave an address in New York on "Evolution as It Is Related to Christian Theism" in which he says that "Darwin's doctrine is perfectly consistent with theism"; and that Darwin "recognized the indications of purpose and adaptation in the phenomena he describes" (p. 6). But he expresses doubts that Darwinism is sufficiently established. We may perhaps select the date 1892 as that at which evolution was fully recognized by leaders in the liberal movement, for it is the year in which Lyman Abbott published his *Evolution of Christianity* and Gladden his *Who Wrote the Bible?;* and in 1893 F. H. Foster, in his inaugural address as Professor of Systematic Theology in Pacific Seminary, California, discussed the bearings of evolution on systematic theology in a spirit of entire friendliness to evolution, —although at that time suggesting no liberal modifications of the currently accepted system,—welcoming an evolutionary

Biblical criticism and an evolutionary "Biblical theology" as contributing to the materials with which the systematic thinker has to do.[53]

In all this confused struggling towards a better understanding of the question between the new science and the old philosophy of religion, the younger men of better education in the Methodist church had taken their part. The greatest service they rendered was that contributed by Professor Borden P. Bowne, of Boston University. He had studied in Germany and was a favourite pupil of Lotze, whose philosopsy he did much to introduce into this country. During the seventies he was writing a series of papers on Theism, which he published in 1879, of which it is impossible to speak too highly. For lucidity, comprehensiveness, and cogency they were not surpassed in all this period. He went to the very bottom of the questions involved in the following paragraphs and in many others:

"It is a widespread conviction that Darwinism is a Medusa head upon which no teleologist can look and live; for in the doctrine of natural selection we have at last a means of accounting for the nicest adaptations without referring to any adapting intelligence. In truth, however, the controversy lies back of Darwinism. The facts gathered under this theory are quite susceptible of a teleological interpretation. The objections based upon this theory are but special phases of a long-standing dispute between science, as such, and the belief in design as such. In studying the history of thought, we are met by the strange fact that when men have discovered how a natural effect is produced, they begin to think that there is no purpose in its production. To learn how a thing is done weakens faith in any design in its doing. Thus the nebular theory, inadequate as it is to the facts, has greatly lessened faith in any design displayed in the heavens. The solar system, it is said, is a necessary outcome of gravitation and inertia, and can dispense with any guiding intelligence. And from the beginning, the study of efficient causes has tended to discredit the belief in design; and conversely the believers in design have tended to ignore the reality and necessity of efficient causes in order to its realization. Both Plato and Aristotle complain of Anaxagoras, that, having assumed mind as the cause of order, he

still continues to explain natural phenomena by physical agents. Aristophanes attacked Socrates for seeking a physical explanation of the clouds; for this, he held, was downright atheism. Both theists and atheists have repeated this error ever since.

"A partial reason of the hostility of physics to teleology is found in a coarse conception of the latter doctrine. To our human purposes matter exists as something given, and our aims are impressed upon it from without. Hence in all our machines there are two elements: (1) the material and its laws, and (2) the laws of the combination which have been impressed upon it; or to use the Aristotelian phrase, there are matter and form. The matter does not explain the form, and the form is not inherent in the matter. Now, when we speak of the universe as designed, the undeveloped mind is prone to look for these two factors there also, and in the same external relation matter is viewed as external to form, and form is imposed upon matter. Accordingly we think of the matter of the universe as being just as external to the purpose of the system as it is to our human aims. In this way teleology comes to be regarded as implying constant interference and a mechanical making of things. Thus the notion arises that whatever can be explained by physical laws and agents is rescued from the control of mind. We find this thought in the oft-made criticism, that the design argument at best would prove only an arranger and not a creator of the universe. We find it also in the eager search for breaks in the physical order which is so often made by theistic writers. But such a conception belongs to the infancy of thought; and teleology is not bound to accept such a view. Since the time of Leibnitz, and even of Aristotle, there ought to be no difficulty in the conception of an immanent purpose of which nature is but the substantial expression. The teleologist may hold, then, to the absolute continuity of natural laws, and at the same time hold that purpose was the *prius* and condition of the system's existence. He may hold that purpose is realized, not by raids into the realm of natural law, but through natural law; and that purpose was legislated into the inmost law and essence of things, so that things and their laws are what they are because of that purpose; and so that in their necessary unfolding they shall realize that purpose. This was the conception held by Leibnitz, and this was the way in which he reconciled mechanism and teleology."

And then he lucidly explains how "the chief cause of the hostility of physical science to teleology lies in the fact that the

physicist, as such, and the teleologist, as such, occupy entirely different standpoints. . . . The physicist asks of any natural product, how it was brought about; and sets himself to discover the agents that have produced it. The teleologist asks, what it means, now that it is here, and what place it takes in the universal plan. He says, It is here to fulfill a purpose; but the physicist says, It is here because there was a series of antecedents which necessarily produced it." [54]

And yet, even in the Methodist church there remained multitudes who joined with Hodge in declaring Darwinism atheism; and [as] late as 1920 efforts were begun in several of the States of the Union to turn out every teacher in public schools and in the colleges and universities who did not repudiate Darwinism because it was "atheism"!

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10. *The Baptist Quarterly,* 1868, pp. 267, 270, 271.
11. *Ibid.,* 1871, p. 24.
12. *Ibid.,* p. 75 ff.
13. *Ibid.,* 1873, p. 262.
14. *Ibid.,* 1874, p. 149 ff.
15. *The New Englander,* 1867, p. 607.
16. *Ibid.,* p. 607 f.
17. A. P. Peabody, *Christianity the Religion of Nature,* p. 58.
18. *Bibliotheca Sacra,* 1872, p. 288.
19. Ingham Lectures, p. 49.
20. *Ibid.,* p. 79.
21. *Ibid.,* p. 95.
22. Quoted by Alexander Winchell in his *Doctrine of Evolution,* p. 113. The same blindness as to the argument shown by President Asa Mahan, Ingham Lectures, 1872,—"An endless diversity of grape has been developed by domestication and other causes from some one original. Therefore the grape may develop into the apple tree."
23. Alexander Winchell, *The Doctrine of Evolution,* p. 104 ff.

24. *Ibid.,* p. 114 ff.

25. *International Cyclopædia,* art. "Winchell."

26. There was another disenabling influence operating upon Dr. Hodge's mind, which, perhaps ought to be indicated, the influence of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. God has ordained from all eternity "whatsoever comes to pass." This leans very strongly to the view that everything is of God's immediate volition, and therefore activity. To be sure, the Confession (Chapter III, sect. i.) declares that the "contingency of second causes" is not taken away; but the eternity of the volition remains. Such a scheme is opposed to the very central thought of evolution. How an adherent of the Westminster Confession *could* be an evolutionist it is hard to see.

27. Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism?,* p. 48 *et al.*

28. *Ibid.,* p. 39.

29. *Ibid.,* p. 41.

30. *Ibid.,* p. 70 f.

31. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man,* Chap. XXI, p. 701 (Burt's edit.). [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]

32. Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism?,* p. 56.

33. *Ibid.,* p. 145.

34. *Ibid.,* p. 58. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]

35. *Ibid.,* p. 43.

36. *Ibid.,* p. 104.

37. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man,* p. 707 (Burt's edit.). [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]

38. Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism?,* p. 173.

39. *Ibid.* p. 177.

40. Reported in the *New York Tribune.*

41. J. W. Dawson, *The Bible and Science,* p. 142.

42. Asa Gray, *Darwiniana,* p. 266 ff. (Originally an article in *The Nation,* May 28, 1874.)

43. *Ibid.,* p. 282.

44. John Fiske, *The Idea of God,* p. xii f.

45. *Darwinism and Other Essays,* p. 7 ff.

46. *The Idea of God,* p. xvi.

47. *Ibid.,* p. xxi ff. [The italics are the author's.]

48. James McCosh, *The Development Hypothesis,* p. 45.

49. *Ibid.,* p. 47. See Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution,* p. 63 ff. (Eng. trans.)

50. James McCosh, *The Development Hypothesis,* p. 99.

51. This step on Beecher's part is fully described in the chapter on his "School" below.

52. This work was published in 1868. It says: Darwin "teaches that the so-called species in nature are the accidental, but not intended, consequences of certain combinations" (p. 604). This is, of course, a misunderstanding. But, in expressing his own view he says: "The law of development cannot, therefore, drive the fact of design out of the universe nor dispense with the assumption of design as one of the axioms of science" (p. 634).

53. F. H. Foster, "Evolution and the Evangelical System of Doctrine," *Bibliotheca Sacra,* 1893, p. 408 ff.

54. Borden P. Bowne, *Studies in Theism.*

IV

THE SCHOOL OF BUSHNELL

WE HAVE already had occasion to note the influence of Horace Bushnell on the thinkers whose work has passed under our eye. Even Andover is not without evidences of his influence.[1] That influence is so pervasive in all the liberal thinkers of the following years that it were not far from the truth to style Bushnell as the originator of the whole movement. It is important that we pause a moment, upon the threshold of our consideration of those writers who may be called his "school," to consider the characteristics of Bushnell as a liberal which have determined his influence quite as much as the specific ideas which he put forth and which were adopted by his pupils.

In an earlier work [2] the present writer has expressed his appreciation of Bushnell considered as a member of the New England school and a contributor to its enrichment and development. His service may be summarized as bringing life into what was largely arid and dead. He emphasized the necessity for every thinker to recreate truth for himself by the originative processes of the mind, the religious life as itself a source of theology, the importance of the religious nurture of children as the method of their religious development; and he greatly enriched our theology at many points. These excellencies arose from the fact that he was a seer rather than a systematic and logical thinker. His deficiencies as a leader in thought arose from the same source. He was not a theological scholar, and he lacked in theological thoroughness. He treated those doctrines which the necessities of his own thinking, or the requirements of his work as a preacher suggested, but he neither examined carefully their relations to other portions of the theological field nor followed them out to a complete treatment in themselves. Radical as he seemed to be, he was for

the most part a great conservative, accepting the Bible and a large portion of the Christian system as it was handed on to him without special question. Nor was his thought always clear in itself. The sermon which he preached at the installation of Washington Gladden in North Adams (1866) illustrates all these excellencies and many of his defects.[3] It is designed to present the thought that our salvation comes from personal contact with Jesus Christ. "We put the Gospel too generally out of its proper divine form . . . theologizing [it]. . . . I seriously doubt whether the more strictly proper matter of our Gospel is capable of any such thing. . . . A Gospel of the face, an all transcending fact-form, life-form Gospel made out for us" he seeks to present. Christ "does not imagine that some notional view, or opinion, or doctrine of the being lifted up, is going to heal, but that He Himself lifted up will do it. . . . The soul lives only when Christ has entered the soul as life. . . . The Gospel . . . must get expression not through tongues and propositional wisdom, and the clatter of much argument, but through living persons, seen in all the phases of the better life they live." And yet he meant that only thought kindled with emotion has motive power in men towards a holy life, and that a person, even the person of Jesus, can affect men only as it stirs thought within them and sets them upon that originative, creative thinking of which he elsewhere speaks. The power of the sermon as rhetoric was great, as all Bushnell's sermons were, but the systematizer needed to come after him, "propositionizing, schematizing," before it could be transmuted into theology. His great defect as a leader and the thing that disqualified him for bringing those who followed him to a speedy adjustment with their times was the fact that he belonged in the past, in the first half of the century, and had done his thinking then. He was not prepared to understand the new thought which broke out with Darwin's treatise, either by education or personal study. Nor was he in touch with the epoch-making work of the critical scholarship of the last half-century. In fact it appeared too late for his appropriation. It is from these defects, which are not in any way chargeable to him as faults,

but which are nevertheless very real, that some of the peculiarities of the subsequent development arose. We shall find a certain fragmentariness in the work of all our writers of this strain, a certain superficiality of thought, a certain vagueness, and an adoption of mutually contradictory positions. They break away this or that fragment of truth, rather than take the whole mass. They often do not follow their thought out to its necessary conclusions. And they furnish no great systemizer to bring harmony and conclusiveness into their common labour.

We have selected the year 1877 as marking the public and open indication of the beginning of a liberalizing of our theology. The year 1880 may be said to have seen the beginnings of the Andover movement. It was, however, in the year 1883, when the lapse of several years had promoted the ripening of his thought, that Theodore T. Munger of North Adams, published his *Freedom of Faith,* which was the maturest and best exposition of the movement so far as it had then proceeded. The book consisted of a series of sermons, to which a most excellent essay on the New Theology was prefixed. To this essay we must first turn our attention.

The essay first states what the New Theology is *not*. "It does not propose to do without a theology." [4] One cannot say that Mr. Munger always remembered this statement, for in his condemnation of the leading systems of Calvinistic theology, he sometimes seems to condemn theology itself; but he was certainly striving to attain clearness and consistency of thought, and this is all that systematic theology is. If he does not always succeed in attaining complete consistency or clearness, he is not, unfortunately, alone among thinkers in this respect. He indicates, in passing, the sources of his own inspiration in mentioning Erskine, Campbell, McLeod, Maurice, Stanley, Robertson, the Hare brothers, and Bushnell as "the modern authors whom it most consults."

Nor does the New Theology "part with the historic faith of the Church, but rather seeks to put itself in its line. . . . It

allies itself even with the older rather than the later theologies, . . . the early Greek theology" rather than with Augustine.

"It does not reject the specific doctrines of the Church of the past. It holds to the Trinity . . . to the divine sovereignty . . . the Incarnation . . . the Atonement . . . the Resurrection . . . to judgment . . . to justification by faith . . . to regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit. . . . It does not explain away from these doctrines their substance, nor minimize them, nor aim to do else than present them as revealed in the Scriptures and as developed in history and in the life of the church and of the world." It might be thought by all this that Munger and others with him were untouched by the new thought upon the Bible introduced by evolutionary criticism. This, as we shall see, would be a misapprehension. But it will be seen that right here is one of the principal obscurities of their thought, for they do not consistently apply, although they accept, more largely than they are themselves aware, certain revolutionary doctrines on the authority of the Bible; but Munger, at least, makes a statement as to the Scriptures, soon to be fully considered by us, that leaves little to be desired for correctness or completeness.

Nor is the New Theology "iconoclastic in its temper" or schismatic.

Passing now to the positive features of the new theology, "it claims for itself a somewhat larger and broader use of the reason than has been accorded to theology." A somewhat longer quotation is here demanded by the importance of the subject and the fulness of the treatment.

"The fault of the theology now passing is that it insists on a presentation of doctrines in such a way as perpetually to challenge the reason. By a logic of its own—a logic created for its own ends, and not a logic drawn from the depth and breadth of human life—it frets and antagonizes the fundamental action of human nature. If Christianity has any human basis it is its entire reasonableness. It must not only sit easily on the mind, but it must ally itself with it in all its normal action. If it chafes it, if it is a burden, if it antagonizes, it detracts from itself; the human mind cannot be detracted from.

Man is a knower; the reason never ceases to be less than itself without losing all right to use itself as reason. Consequently a full adjustment between reason and Christianity is steadily to be sought. If there is conflict, uneasiness, burdensomeness, the cause is to be looked for in interpretation rather than in the human reason. For, in the last analysis, *revelation*—so far as its acceptance is concerned —*rests on reason and not reason on revelation.* The logical order is, first reason, and then revelation—the eye before sight. It is just here that a narrow and formal theology inserts its hurtful fallacy; it says, Use your reason for ascertaining that a revelation is probable, and has been made, after which the only office of the mind is to accept the contents of the revelation without question, *i.e.*, without other use of the reason than some small office of collating texts and drawing inferences. But this is formal and arbitrary. The mind accepts revelation because it accepts the *substance* of revelation. It does not stand outside upon some structure of logical inference that a revelation has been made, and therefore is to be accepted, but instead it enters into the material of the revelation, and plants its feet there. The reason believes the revelation because *in itself* it is reasonable. . . . In brief, we accept the Christian faith because of the reasonableness of its entire substance, and not because we have somehow become persuaded that a revelation has been made. It is impossible to conceive of it as gaining foothold in the mind and heart in any other way, nor can faith in it be otherwise secured."[5]

This seems to be substantially identical with the position that the authority of any principle over us resides in its perceived truth. It can be true to me only as I see it to be true; and only that which I perceive to be true can control my actions. In taking this position Munger had come into the full possession of the modern thought.[6]

But in respect to the interpretation of the Bible, he is less satisfactory. It would have been well if he had simply said that it was to be interpreted historically. Then, if he had learned that it is a human, a very human, record of the way in which men have learned of God, that it has many strata of literary composition embodying different intellectual conceptions of truth, that its earlier and truer have often been over-

laid by later and less correct conceptions, that its history is not history at all in the modern sense of that word but rather traditional material selected for the purpose of edification, he would have grasped the full truth in this direction. Instead of this he emphasizes elements of the subject which are very true and important, such as attention to the local colouring given by time and place of writing, its origination by the labour of men, its character as a history of revelation, but not the revelation itself, the dependence of interpretation on the principle of "moral evolution or development." More important still:

"Another principle is that the Bible, like the order of history, is a continually unfolding revelation of God; it is a book of eternal laws and facts that are evolving their truth and reality in the process of history. Its full meaning is not yet disclosed; it is an ever-opening book. It is always leading man in the right direction, but it does not show him at once, in clear light, the whole domain of truth. It is, therefore, a book to be constantly and freshly interpreted; it may mean tomorrow more than it means today. . . . [But how shall one] find out what it actually means? . . . The answer is brief: When it must; *i.e.,* when there is such an accumulation of knowledge and of evidence against the apparent meaning that the mind cannot tolerate the inconsistency, it must search the text to see if it will not bear a meaning, or rather does not contain a meaning,—indeed, was intended to convey a meaning that we have failed to catch,—consistent with ascertained facts. It is already a familiar process, as illustrated in the treatment of the first chapters of *Genesis.*" [7]

This is quite Bushnellian. But it is also the uncovering of the reason for much of the halting progress of the liberal theology in Congregationalism. We all know about that interpretation of *Genesis,* how, when the record of the rocks compelled men to believe in the immense periods of time required for their formation, it was said that the "days" of the first chapter did not mean days of twenty-four hours, but great periods of undesignated duration. But that interpretation left the whole question of special creation of every species over against the idea of evolution under one system of law, to arise later and initiate a huge contest, which is not yet over for the generality

of plain Christians, whatever may be true for some favoured classes. It would have been infinitely better could men have seen—could men *now* see—that the true suggestion of the historical criticism of the Bible was that, in writing it, men took what materials they had for conveying their ideas, that in this case they took the cosmology of a time that had no instruments of precision for observation of the facts of nature, and that, therefore, the whole cosmology did not deserve the serious consideration of our day except as throwing light upon the ideas of the ancients, not at all as embodying truth for our acceptance. Then we should have disposed of the whole question at once. The mischief latent in the method which Bushnell and Munger follow is that it prevents progress. It puts the mind in a attitude such that it must be *driven* to new positions, and that by compelling reasons from without, rather than quietly and sweetly led to the early and joyful discovery of the truth. The Trinity of the Godhead, for example—who would to-day venture on the grounds of reasonableness, or even of due modesty and reserve of intellect, to propose such a theory of the inner nature of the Divine Being? Bushnell shrank from it, and proposed a merely modal Trinity. But if the mind would shrink from such assumption of a capacity of estimating the infinite which it does not possess, why should it accept it upon the word of men handed down to us in such a book as the Bible actually is? We shall see that the liberal movement was obliged to go farther than these earlier representatives did; and yet something of the early hesitation and inconsequence clung to it long.

Again: "the New Theology seeks to replace an excessive individuality by a truer view of the solidarity of the race." [8]

It "recognizes a new relation to natural science." While the New Theology will not "go over into the camp of natural science and sit down under the manipulations of a doctrine of evolution with its one category of matter and one invariable force . . . it accepts the theory of physical evolution as the probable method of physical creation, and as having an analogy in morals; but it accepts it under the fact of a personal God

who is revealing Himself, and of human freedom,—facts not to be ascertained with the limits of a material philosophy." Later Munger will have more to say on evolution, to which in due time we must pay attention.[9]

"The New Theology offers a contrast to the Old in claiming for itself a wider study of man"—that is to say, it sought to bring itself into closer relations with the actual facts of human nature and history.[10]

Lastly, "the New Theology recognizes the necessity of a restatement of belief in eschatology." Munger emphasizes the fact that nearly every school of thought recognized this necessity. He then states that the New Theology propounded no new doctrine in respect to eternal salvation or punishment. It simply refused to assert some things which the older theology has sharply defined. It sought rather to transfer the whole matter out of time into eternity. The word "eternal" is a word of moral and spiritual import rather than a time word. At this point, he takes up the contention of Whiton, already sketched. But the New Theology does not plant itself upon a word; it rather seeks to enlighten itself by the general light of the whole revelation of God. It finds "that every human being will receive from the Spirit of God all the influence impelling to salvation that his nature can endure and retain its moral integrity." But where or when man will be perfected, it does not pretend to say. The word "probation" he does not like, but he says, as a kind of summary of the whole matter:

> "Probation will not be determined by the world-age, but by its own laws. It ends when character is fixed,—if indeed we have any right to use a word so out of keeping with moral freedom,—and it is not possible to attach any other bound or limit to it. And character is fixed in evil when all the possibilities . . . are exhausted that would alter the character. The shepherd in the parable seeks the lost sheep till he finds it; shall we add to the parable and say, 'or till he cannot find it'? If we do so, it is in view of the fact that the will of man, made in the image of God, is a mystery deep as the mystery of God Himself." [11]

In all this he modifies but little the views expressed at his North Adams installation.

The discourses which constitute the main part of this volume are occupied with enforcing the new ideas which have come to their preacher, and are of decided power and of great interest and spiritual value; but they do not furnish very much material for a further view of his theological development. It is quite plain, however, that he had not yet squarely faced the difficulties lying in the idea of miracle,[12] for he speaks of the "hourly miracles wrought by personality," as if such a sentence threw light on the subject! There are no "hourly miracles" in the sense in which that word is used when difficulty is seen to lie in it, or when the turning of water into wine, or the feeding of five thousand people from a few loaves and "two fishes," are the miracles referred to. And there is an entire lack of critical treatment of the New Testament which vitiates many a passage of these sermons.

Four years later (1887) Mr. Munger put out another volume entitled *The Appeal to Life*. It is like the former volume, a collection of sermons, but has a preface and an essay or two at the end which will reward our attention. In the preface he discusses the method of the New Theology, "the *vital way*,—that is, truth set in the light of daily life and the real processes of human society . . . in brief, the inductive method." He here strikes a most important note. Calvinistic theology had been too much inclined to follow *a priori* methods, to assume principles and then argue from them as if they were incontrovertible truths. Professor Park, who lauded and followed, in general, the inductive method, did not always escape from the toils of the other. It was high time for a better method to be introduced, and Munger was only following the current of the times which was steadily setting in the direction of what James styled "radical empiricism." To form connections with this philosophy and to follow it were two main duties of thinkers in these days. He says:

"[The inductive] method does not reject dogma, but regards it as subservient,—subject to growth, to increase of knowledge, as al-

ways incomplete, as liable at any time to be justly set aside, and at all times to be held subordinate to the universal laws of humanity. . . . It does not hesitate to generalize truth, but it insists that the generalization shall be an induction from the whole revelation of God, and chiefly from the revelation in humanity regarded as inclusive of the Christ. It holds to this because it believes that the Word came by inspiration through humanity and by the processes of human life and the actual life of its Head. The interpretation of the Word must be according to its method. Hence it searches and reads life as it goes on in the world, in history, in the family, and in the nation. The truth it finds here it finds to be the revealed Word of God." [13]

Of the essays at the end, only the one on evolution [14] need detain us. It begins with a defence of conservatism in theology, and justifies thereby the slowness with which theologians adjusted themselves to the proposal of the theory of evolution. This is a just and wise position, except that theologians had generally waited till they were fairly cudgelled into its acceptance—and many of them would not accept it even in their bruises. But he is now ready to accept the theory, since "having at last become presentable to the world of thought and grown shapely and yielded to limitations, it is winning the suffrage of the world and assuming its place in the hierarchy of truth that ministers to humanity." "As knowledge broadens and wider generalisations are made, we find a certain likeness of process in all realms that indicates one law or method; namely, that of development or evolution. . . . We find the same method in matter, in brute life, in humanity, in social institutions, in government, in religions, in the progress of Christianity. . . . Otherwise, the universe could have no unity. If God worked on one principle in the material realm, on another in the vital, on another in the social, governmental, and moral realm, there would not be a proper universe." He even maintains, and rightly that evolution strengthens the argument from design, much as the contrary had been asserted. And he says:

"If we can look at the universe both as a whole and in all its processes and in all ages, and find one principle working everywhere,

binding together all things, linking one process to another with increasing purpose, and steadily pressing towards a full revelation of God's goodness, we find the argument strengthened by as much as we have enlarged the field of its illustration." [15]

Here he expresses theologically what Bergson later taught, that the whole design of God in the development of life was the final establishment of as much indetermination as possible, in order that there might be a moral world. And in a most remarkable passage, too long for quotation, he not only fully accepts the idea of the evolution of humanity from the lower orders, but says of the developing form in the animal series, "Seen as transient forms in an ever-growing process, thrust aside and buried under Devonian strata, and yielding to more shapely and complex orders, and so climbing by an ever-finer transition to some final and perfect end, we not only can *tolerate* them in thought, but *adore* the directing Power and *delight* in His method. *But the feeling of reverence only possesses us as we discern the creative process issuing in man as a moral being.*" [16]

In this remarkable and beautiful essay Munger settled the question, if there really was any, whether the new liberalism should welcome evolution as one of the great and determining elements in the construction of its view of God and His world. That he did not himself apply it fully all along the line of his studies, and that he was not acquainted with the results of New Testament study under the illumination which it affords, is his misfortune rather than his fault. Indeed, he was too early for the full results of such study to be known.

Dr. Whiton, who also came largely under the influence of Bushnell and hence belongs here, continued to devote considerable attention to theology and issued from time to time books which exercised a noteworthy influence. The first of these was another essay in eschatology, *The Gospel of the Resurrection* (1881). His doctrine was no more Scriptural than it was orthodox, but he pursued the same method in presenting it as in his earlier book, entering into various nice and elaborate studies of

Biblical words and texts to sustain by Biblical authority what was evidently not the meaning of the Bible. His position is that the Resurrection is a present reality, not an event taking place at some distant future time, when the dead are raised all simultaneously, but is all the time taking place, each soul receiving resurrection immediately upon its entrance into the future life. His great argument is such texts as "I AM the resurrection," "So *is* the resurrection of the dead"—an argument which has no validity unless we are to deny to language the power of stating general truths. The resurrection, he goes on to say, is not that of the "dead body," but it is the gift to the soul of a spiritual body. Nor does it occur at some distant time when all shall be raised to one simultaneous "general judgment," as commonly supposed, but "while this world's events are taking place, the grave, the sea, are perpetually giving up their dead, and judgment is perpetually passing on the spirits new-born into the future state, as their actual character is revealed to them in conscience as in the sight of God, and as they enter into the appropriate consequences of being what their course here has made them to be,—worthy or unworthy of the 'resurrection of life.'" [17] Similarly, the "coming of Christ" is a reality of the past, present and future, and the whole resurrected scene is not a miracle, but a *development*. Resurrection is "the entrance into that perfected state of embodied being which is the spiritual result of a Christly life in the present world." [18]

It is of less importance to emphasize the views actually presented in this work than to note the method employed in their defence. They are in fact the outcome of an entirely rationalistic attitude, as may be seen by the various passages in which, with all the implied deference to the Bible and the evident anxiety to obtain its authority for them, the plain meaning of the Bible is consciously evaded. He says:

"I am aware that some exception will be taken to any mode of studying this subject which refuses to be bound by the obvious sense in which the apostles seem to have used the language which they employed in delivering their testimony to the fact. 'It is

time,' says an able advocate of views which I criticize throughout this volume, 'that the language of the Sacred Books should be used in its own sense, the sense which it is manifestly intended to convey.' Yes, but *by whom* intended—by the human seer, or by the Spirit from whom the human seer derived his message? The limitation of the teaching of the Spirit of prophecy by the conceptions of the prophet is flatly against the declaration of Scripture, that 'no prophecy is of any private interpretation,' that is, limited by the mind of the individual interpreter. It is absurd to limit the ideas of a statesman by the ideas of the schoolboy who declaims the statesman's oration. The teaching power of the divine oracles is cut down thereby to the measure of the minds that have transmitted them to us. The promise of our Lord that His Spirit, when come, should 'guide into all truth,' cannot be regarded as limited to the first generation of the church. Greater insight into 'the things pertaining to the kingdom of God' than even apostles possessed, who believed the final catastrophe of the physical heavens and earth to be imminent in their own lifetime, must be accorded to those who have the teaching of Christ's Spirit, together with the commentary upon Christ's words which is furnished by the instructive experience of the Christian centuries." [19]

To say nothing of the bad exegesis of the Scripture passage quoted here, Dr. Whiton makes the determinative criterion of doctrine to lie in the insight of the interpreter. That is the rationalistic position. Why should he take so much pains to distort the Biblical teaching into the form prescribed by his own insight? Why not say frankly, "The Scripture writers thought so and so, but they were wrong. We now know thus and thus"? When he has finished, what has he got as the designation of his doctrine, borrowed from the Bible, but a name which is totally inappropriate? His is no doctrine of *resurrection,* but of a fresh investiture of the soul with a spiritual garment suited to the new conditions of the eternal world. Why not say so? There would be everything to gain in intelligibility and general acceptance by such a course.

It is possible that we may discover the reason for this oblique method employed by our writer in his pamphlet on *The Evolution of Revelation* (1885). This is "a critique of conflicting

opinions concerning the Old Testament," and accepts in general the results of the higher criticism, but evidently with a somewhat faint idea of their true meaning, inasmuch as it speaks of the "ritual code" as growing from age to age under the divine guidance, whereas it was really a process of developing ecclesiasticism, and resulted from declining spiritual life among the people. Whiton writes:

"The new learning steadily gains in the direction of greatly modified opinions as to the date and authorship and exact historicalness of many portions of the Old Testament. Enough has been established to make one thing certain to those who know the facts and are not afraid to admit them. The notion of *'an infallible book,'* a revelation consisting in *documents* of verified authorship and date and accuracy of statement, must be exchanged for the preferable conception of a revelation by *development,* unfolding itself in 'the people of the book' rather than in a book for the people, demonstrating its divineness by the advance of moral life rather than by the finish of the monumental letter, and *made authoritative to us,* not by the testimony of criticism exploring its roots, but *by the testimony of conscience contemplating its fruits.*[13] Nothing is more illusive than the ascription to any form of words, that may be subjected to criticism or controversy, of a higher authoritativeness than resides *in the illuminated conscience, instructed by Christ."* [20]

Or, as he otherwise phrases it:

"Accordingly, in all thinking on this subject, we must emphasize the fact that we have not really 'a written revelation,' but a *revelation that has been written about.* Dean Stanley long ago called notice to the fact that the revelation is not in an impersonal but a personal form, in 'the inspired people' that the book is about. Certain it is that the seeds of moral and religious life took root and grew in the minds of the Jewish race as in no other. *'Salvation is from the Jews.'* The ideas of God, of sin, of redemption from sin, of a holy and blessed future, were unfolded in that little nation as in no other. These ideas, evolved by the prophets of Israel, sung by its poets, worked upon by its lawgivers, sketched in their development by its historians, were finally elaborated, purified, and vitalized with moral power by Jesus of Nazareth, as the essential truth of the Spirit to be made known to all mankind. This is the

divine revelation, not descending from above upon the world, but growing up within the world in the forms of personal life, feeling, thinking, ripening, under the teaching of the indwelling Spirit of God." [21]

This could hardly be improved upon as a general statement; but its meaning was not fully grasped, because its application to the New Testament (which Dr. Whiton was not here considering) was not perceived, and he continued to use the New Testament books in a totally uncritical method, not even recognizing the colossal evidence of the style of the Fourth Gospel, for example, as complete and final against its objectiveness as a report of the teachings of the Master. But at this point he is the more readily to be excused because the higher criticism of the New Testament had as yet scarcely been introduced to English readers, and it was generally thought that the methods employed in the criticism of the Old did not apply to it.

The theory of this book as to the Bible is, then, good; it fails only in its application. Whether Dr. Whiton understood it fully even as formulated by himself can only be perceived when we gain the full answer to such questions as these:—Does he cease, or does he not cease, to appeal to the Bible as the reason for believing certain propositions? Does he retain, or does he not retain, doctrines which are derived from the Bible on the basis of the old theory of inspiration, such as the Trinity and the Incarnation? Does he reject the manifest errors of the Bible because they are seen to be errors, or does he try to give a new meaning to the Bible by his old processes of juggling with its various words and texts? Does he, or does he not, make a straight appeal to reason? That is, does he, or does he not, base his doctrines upon their *evident truth?* The answer may, perhaps, be gained from his next volume, *Gloria Patri* (1892).

This is Dr. Whiton's largest and most important contribution to theology, and consists of talks about the Trinity, in dialogue form. He is profoundly dissatisfied with standard formulations of the doctrine, objecting to the practical tritheism of some writers, to the Sabellianism of others, and to the credal doc-

trines of three persons in the Godhead and two natures in the person of Christ. He ascribes the errors which he finds in the doctrine to the ancient conception of God as dwelling apart from the universe He has created, and would substitute for this the modern view of the immanence of God and modify the doctrine accordingly. Humanity has been also wrongly conceived as separated by a great gulf from the divine, whereas men "are coming to agree in regarding human nature as essentially one with the divine." [22] "The core of humanity is its moral and spiritual nature" and this is identical with the moral nature of God. Hence Christ *as a man* is "consubstantial" (*homoousios*) with God.[23] He accordingly teaches that there is one nature in Christ, the human nature, and that therein consists His divinity.[24]

Since the transcendence of God does not mean His separation from His world, the created world is the expression of Himself. It is His Son. The whole world is filially connected with Him.

"The unseen can be known only by the seen which comes forth from it. The all-generating or Paternal life, which is hidden from us, can be known only by the generated or Filial life in which it reveals itself. The goodness and righteousness which inhabits eternity can be known only by the goodness and righteousness which issues from it in the successive births of time. God above the world is made known only by God in the world. God transcendent, the Father, is revealed by God immanent, the Son. This revealing of the Father, which is the function of the Son, did not begin with Christ, as the Scripture itself and the history of religious thought and life demonstrate, but it was perfected by Christ. In our conception of 'the Son' we must include, at least, all the more or less Christly men who lived before Christ, for in them also was the Spirit of the Son. Thus it is clear that what Christ claims He claims specially, but not exclusively, for that would be falsely." [25]

Hence there is an "eternal sonship," since God is always expressing Himself.[26] But Christ, as in Him there is a perfection of moral union with God which does not exist in other men, even the best besides Him, is pre-eminently a son, or the Son of

God. Thus He is God, since no line can be drawn between God and man. Christ has "no advantage of indwelling Deity that is essentially impossible to us," [27] because His unity with God is a moral unity. This incarnation takes place in men throughout human history. Man may finally reach the stature of the fulness of Christ, that is saturation "with consciousness of the indwelling Father." [28] In brief summary Dr. Whiton presents the views thus far expressed, as follows:

"What we have gone over I would sum up in this triple statement: 1. The Living Father, Maker of heaven and earth, does not live apart from His creation, but lives in it from the beginning, as its Begotten or Filial Life. And this universal Life, whether existing or pre-existing, whether before the world or in the world, through all its myriad ranks from the highest to the lowest, whether in angels or in amœbas, in men or in the Christ, is His co-eternal Word, or Son—His utterance, His offspring. 2. The Living God in His unknown and ~~utterance, His offspring. 2. The Living God in His unknown and~~ infinite transcendency above the world is God the Father, but in His revealed immanency in the life of the world is God the Son. In this conception of God, the ancient chasm between God and man, which error has fancied and sin has exaggerated, is filled at all points, not at one point only (as in the ancient fallacy of the 'two natures' that were said to be conjoined in Christ). The immanent is one with the transcendent Power; the Filial stream is one with its Paternal Fount. 3. To Christ supremely belongs the name of Son, which includes all the life that is begotten of God. He is the beloved and unique representative of this universal sonship, *'the first born,'* said Paul, *'of all creation.'* In Christ, the before unconscious sonship of the world awakes to consciousness of the Father. Worthiest to bear the name of *the* Son of God, in a pre-eminent but not exclusive right, is He. Nor only has He revealed to orphaned men their partnership with Him in the Life and Love of the All-Father. His peerless distinction as the Son is, that in Him shine at their brightest these moral glories which belong to the very crown of deity." [29]

All this is offered in replacement of the credal doctrine of the Trinity. But Dr. Whiton regards the Holy Spirit as the "neglected term in the Trinity," and proposes to add something to

the ancient development of it. This he does by formulating the Trinity in one place thus:

"The Transcendent Divine Life that is above the world, the Immanent Divine Life that is universal through the world and perfected in the Christ, and the Individualized Divine Life that is begotten in each separate consciousness and conscience." [30]

The Holy Spirit is "God quickening conscience to truth and love and righteousness, . . . the personality of God energizing in this special line of His power." [31] But, as thus conceived, the activity of God in the manifestation, would not seem to be different essentially from that in the operation, of the Spirit. Dr. Whiton sees this point, and endeavours to avoid it by distinguishing between the common, collective life of Christians, which proceeds from Christ, and the individual life of each man guided in a special way, appropriate to his needs, by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit awakens and sustains "this individual consciousness of a Divine grace and a Divine duty." [32] The recognition of this work of the Spirit and a more conscious dependence upon Him, he believes to be the great need of the Church to-day.

Now, this is not, of course, the historic doctrine of the Trinity, for it is distinctly proposed as a substitute for it. But it is no more the doctrine of the Scriptures; and, so far as it is a means of supporting the doctrine, Dr. Whiton's appeal to the Bible is in vain. But he does not squarely place himself on the ground upon which he ought to stand and really does stand, the ground of pure reason. He still takes Biblical and ecclesiastical terms to designate his positions, which are quite other than the positions had in mind in the Bible and in the Church. His "trinity" is nothing but a modal trinity, whereas both Bible and Church have a Trinity of eternal form of existence in mind. His "incarnation" is no special entrance into humanity of an eternal and distinctive divine hypostasis, but simply a special form of the activity of the one personal God. Why put the new wine into the old bottles? It may be of some use in assisting Christians and churchmen to make the transfer

from old positions to new—or it may *not*—but it will certainly embarrass the fresh inquirer and confuse and mislead the rising generation. It is a half-way, untenable position that is thus assumed. It is repeating the immemorial error of Christian apology which has perpetually asserted that new premises of thought "only added new lustre to the old truth," and the immemorial fallacy of the saying that the apostles or the fathers "built better than they know." Such methods conceal change, disguise progress, frustrate it, thwart it. If Dr. Whiton had in the beginning adopted the bold, fearless, uncompromising advocacy of new positions on the ground of their evident reasonableness, he would have set the pace of the movement, and relieved the pulpit of much suspicion of insincerity and dishonesty, which has driven many able and earnest men out of the churches.[33]

Dr. Whiton published two remaining books which should be briefly noticed here. The first is *The Divine Satisfaction* (1899).

"The writer's reliance [he says] for making any advance toward a more satisfactory treatment of such questions is upon the Biblical conception of the supernatural as within the natural, though transcending it, and of God as ruling humanity from within rather than from without, through an educational rather than a governmental process." [34]

The divine law, accordingly, is not "what God has enacted, but what God *is,* involving inevitable consequences to us according to our chosen relation to Him." [35] Hence, it is self-operating, the penalty untransferable, no other satisfaction admissible than the re-establishment of the normal relation which it requires.[36] The real and efficacious atonement is a work of reparation within the spirit itself, to God and to itself.

"We are to think of God in Christ as the ever indwelling Moral Power in the world, who, through the object lesson of Jesus' life and death, interpreted to us by the Holy Spirit, enables us to offer that adequate repentance for the past, and to return to that adequate repentance in the present and future, in which the supreme

satisfaction of the law, that is, of God, is realized. To the historical work of Christ in His sacrificial life and death of love, we give the name of the Atonement, because that work, as it affects us in our contemplation of it, begets the enabling power within us to accomplish the real atonement in conscience, which is accepted in heaven because effective on earth, satisfying to God because satisfying to that which is of God in us . . . an educational rather than a governmental atonement.[37] . . . This atonement pays no man's debt to law. It rather communicates to him the moral power to pay it himself. The gift of redemption is all of grace. The gift is not of escape from law, but of power to conform to law. The atoning process is not a governmental, but an educational necessity, to teach and enable the conscience to be at one with the love of God, the law of God and the righteousness of God." [38]

He teaches consequently that the penalty of sin is never remitted. "A sin without its punishment is as inconceivable as a cause without an effect." [39] He, therefore, regards forgiveness as the restoration of normal personal relations between the repentant soul and the heavenly Father, the renewal of sonship and fellowship.

If he had fully recognized that the sacrificial law of Israel was of purely human origin, and that Paul's transfer of its principles to the work of Christ was untenable, and had simply presented that work for himself in the terms naturally suggested by the teaching office of a great prophet, Dr. Whiton would both have made for greater clearness and set a good example to his successors. In the last of his books which we need to examine, *Miracles and Supernatural Religion* (1903), he discusses the miracles of healing ascribed to Jesus, generally accepting them as credible and historical, including even the raising of Jairus' daughter, etc., since he regards them as mere resuscitation of persons not really dead. But his position upon the whole is absolutely halting, ambiguous, and unsatisfactory. His definition of miracles does not cover the ground, for he says, "In the New Testament a reputed miracle is not any sort of wonderful work upon any sort of occasion, but an act of benevolent will exerted for an immediate benefit, and tran-

scending the then existing range of human intelligence to explain, and power to achieve." This provides no place for such reputed miracles as the changing of water into wine or the feeding of the five thousand from a few pieces of bread and fish. These involve the immediate creation of matter, and thus a violation of a law of nature. And further, if anything is evident to the unprejudiced reader, it is that there is in the New Testament no such high and philosophic idea of miracles as the current apology for miracles, and Dr. Whiton's also, requires, but that the attitude of mind there reflected is that of credulous delight in the marvellous, not differing essentially from the attitude of the peasants of Lourdes or of St. Anne de Beaupré. The conservatism of mind which thus held Dr. Whiton a prisoner in the realm of impossibilities is one of the many evidences of the strength of the considerations and their compelling force which finally drove him to that large degree of liberty which he wrested for himself by prodigious efforts. Liberal Congregationalism has been no light achievement easily won!

REFERENCES

1. See *Progressive Orthodoxy,* p. 90, l. 3 ff; p. 204 f, l. 31.
2. F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology,* pp. 401-422.
3. H. Bushnell, *Sermons on Living Subjects,* p. 73 ff. The title of the sermon was "The Gospel of the Face," and the text, 2 Cor. iv. 6.
4. T. T. Munger, *The Freedom of Faith,* p. 7 ff.
5. *Ibid.,* p. 11 ff. [The italics are Dr. Foster's in the first two instances.]
6. See also p. 57 for confirmatory statements.
7. *Ibid.,* p. 19 ff.
8. *Ibid.,* p. 22.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 25 ff.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 28.
11. *Ibid.,* pp. 35, 38, 42 f.
12. See p. 62 ff.
13. T. T. Munger, *The Appeal to Life,* p. vi ff.
14. *Ibid.,* 209 ff.
15. *Ibid.,* pp. 211, 215, 217.
16. *Ibid.,* p. 221 f. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
17. James M. Whiton, *The Gospel of the Resurrection,* p. 99.
18. *Ibid.,* p. 236.
19. James M. Whiton, *The Evolution of Revelation,* p. 16.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
22. James M. Whiton, *Gloria Patri*, pp. 49, 20.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 38 f.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 72.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 91 f.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
33. This is no place for a minute criticism of Dr. Whiton's doctrine considered as an attempt to contribute to theological progress; but a few points may be noticed, since they afford light as to his methods. He represents on pp. 58 and 59 Christ as the goal or "final cause," as he styles it, of the universe. He quotes some of the several passages in which all things are said to be "through" Christ. But this word *through* points out the channel, or agent, of the operation. Another Greek case, the accusative, would have been used with the preposition employed, had the sense been that asserted by Dr. Whiton. He seems also, on p. 116, to be entirely ignorant of the distinction between "procession" of the Holy Spirit and "mission." The former is ontological, the latter phenomenal. On p. 76 he makes what to me, for one, is an absolutely new and unthought of proposition, viz., of the *pre-existence of Christ's humanity!* He affirms on p. 70 that no line can be drawn between divinity and humanity on account of the essential likeness of man to God. But will he deny that God is independent while we are dependent, unlimited in power while we are possessed of very little, possessed of a knowledge and a capacity of which ours are a feeble echo? One can hardly understand what is meant by maintaining that Jesus is divine *because* human.

Was Dr. Whiton influenced specially by German theologians? The only trace I have discovered of it, and a doubtful one it is, is the substantial Ritschlianism of a distinction made on p. 80 ff. between the manifestation of the substance of deity which is *not* found in Christ, and the manifestation of His *powers*. The substance he regards as altogether unknowable.

34. James M. Whiton, *The Divine Satisfaction*, p. 8.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 17 f.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

V

THE SCHOOL OF HENRY WARD BEECHER

AMONG the representatives of the developing New England Theology one of the most incisive and clear thinkers was Lyman Beecher, who ultimately became President and Professor of Theology in Lane Theological Seminary. His sons were all ministers and all able men, but the most famous by far, and the most influential in the theological sphere as well as the first among great American preachers, was Henry Ward Beecher. His theological education was received from his father in Lane, and was substantially the same as would have been given him at New Haven at that date, for Lyman Beecher was a close friend and a theological associate of Dr. N. W. Taylor.[1] But it had a certain twist in the direction of the elder Calvanism because of the connection of Lane with the Presbyterian church and the consequent emphasis laid upon agreement with the Westminister Confession. Multitudes of Congregationalists became Presbyterians in the West, and upon them all the influence of the Confession was retroactive. A certain impression of the greatness of the Confession and of the necessity of agreement with it was created by the very fact that it was the "standard" of the church. The "improvements" of the New England divines, however contributory to clearness and the removal of difficulties, were likely to be regarded as "non-essential," and the gloom which the ideas of inherited sin and all-embracing predestination spread over the mind would remain, after all, largely unlifted. The great central doctrine of Jonathan Edwards that the essential attribute of God, leading to creation and determining all the course of the divine providence, was love, did not and could not come to full recognition amid such influences.

The young Beecher early reacted from this re-enforced Calvinism of the New School Presbyterian Church. He restored

the freedom of the will to its proper place in his thinking from the obscurations which the definitions of various sorts of ability had thrown about it. But still more, he rehabilitated the principle of the divine love and made it really the ruling principle of his theology as it had been made, it is true, by his predecessors, but scarcely more than verbally. In the year 1847 he became pastor of the new Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, by which time it may be said that he had cut loose from the entanglements of the Presbyterian system. His theology was free, but the freedom and breadth of his great personality, and his profound interest in men and in life, counted for still more in the sum total of his theological as well as his practical influence upon his times.

What his theology was at the close of thirteen years of work in the Plymouth pulpit was expressed by himself in a sermon of the date January 8th, 1860.

"Let me say, then, that I have looked upon men as invariably and without exception so spiritually dead, so sinful and carnal, as to need a change of heart, wrought by divine power. I believe that men universally, just as much where the Gospel is preached as where it has never been heard, are in a state which, if they are not redeemed from it by God's Spirit, will be fatal to them. I believe there is a character to be built up by the truths of Christ, and by the influence of God's Spirit, in men. The conversion of men from their sins and their edification in the Christian life, therefore, I have proposed to myself as the very aim of my ministry. To that I have given the burden of my life among you. Although, that I might not weary you by endless repetitions, that I might draw the attention of the young, that I might adapt my teaching to the ever varying disposition of this great congregation, I have sought to come at these substantial things from many different sides—from the side of fact, of reason, of imagination—yet the target at which I have aimed has been the redemption of men from their sins, and their salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. . . . In respect to doctrines and forms of truth, I have also used my liberty to do God's work upon men in that way in which it seemed to me best that it should be done. I have sought to build up no philosophical system, not because I think there may not be such work done, but because I do

not feel called to do it. . . . I have not sought to cast aspersions upon doctrines; but when I have found doctrines so covered up with rubbish as to work mischief among men, I have not hesitated to tear off the rubbish and reveal their true nature. To me there is no sacredness in forms. To me two things are sacred and only two: one is the living soul of man and the other is the living soul of God. To everything else I am indifferent, except so far as it may be used with reference to the good of the one and the glory of the other." [2]

In a sermon preached a few Sundays later [3] he maintains the divinity of Christ by "an argument derived from his relations to the human soul," which, he says, "will approach nearest to the genius of the Gospels." The question which he seeks to answer is whether we may love and worship Christ. This he answers affirmatively, declaring that Christianity is Christ Himself. The sermon manifests complete acceptance of the Fourth Gospel as historic in its minute details, and of the whole Gospel story of Jesus' life, with all its miracles unquestioned. There is no evidence here of essential departure from the trinitarian orthodoxy of the Congregational churches. A few years later he preached a sermon [4] in which he seems to have been influenced by Bushnell's recent volume on the Vicarious Sacrifice. He says:

"We often contrast law and love; and in our inferior being, perhaps it is necessary to analyze and take them apart and contrast them, although in the divine mind and administration they are doubtless inseparably mingled. As presented to us in the human condition, law may be considered rather as a preventive—seldom as a curative. Love is both. It prevents, but still more, it heals transgression. Law punishes for the sake of society. Human penalties are devices of human weakness, needful for our state, simply because other and better ways are scarcely within our reach. But, while law makes transgressors suffer, love suffers *for* transgressors. Both carry justice; both vindicate purity, truth, mercy; but law, in the whole sphere of human administration, puts the burden, the woe, the deep damnation, on the transgressor. Love, yet juster, higher, purer, takes the suffering and the woe upon itself, and re-

leases the transgressor. Which carries the sublimest justice, law or love? Which rules highest, reaches deepest, spreads widest, and best meets the wants of man's whole being—the penal justice that says, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die,' or the disclosed justice of love which says, 'I have found a ransom, I bear the stripes, I carry the guilt and penalty, I suffer that the world may go free'? . . . This to my mind is the redemptive idea. I do not believe it is a play between an abstract system of law and a right of mercy. I think that nowhere in the world is there so much law as in redemption or so much justice as in love."

Beecher was, therefore, constantly moving on the theological plane towards a freer position, but the steps of that progress it would be difficult, if not impossible, to trace. He expressed himself differently at different times, and often seemed to contradict himself, so much so as to gain the general reputation of "having no theology." But this was far from true. He was most seriously studying and meditating on the great doctrines in the light of the studies of the times. After a while the results of this study began to appear, and then grave doubts were felt in some quarters as to his "soundness in the faith," so much so that in 1882 he withdrew from the New York and Brooklyn Association of Congregational Ministers in order to relieve them of all responsibility for him and all risk of their being identified with him in positions which were subject to public criticism. The Association passed at the time a minute expressing their entire confidence in him and requesting him to withdraw his resignation. But he persisted in it. He presented at this meeting a statement of his theological position [5] in which he declares his purpose to shun merely abstract theories and to limit his theology to those fundamental things which pertain to "conviction of sin, conversion, faith, dominant love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the building up of a Christlike character." He here affirmed his belief in a personal God; in the Trinity, which he accepted "without analysis," although rejecting the theories "hinted in the Nicene Creed and outspun with amazing ignorance of knowledge in the Athanasian Creed"; in the divinity of Christ "without break,

pause, or aberration"; in the Holy Spirit; in "a general and special providence"; in miracles, "especially the miraculous conception of Christ and His Resurrection from the dead"; in regeneration; in the inspiration of the Bible as "the record of the steps of God in revealing Himself and His will to man"; in the Atonement; and in future punishment. It was to be noted that he still quoted the Westminster Confession, in this case for its statement of inspiration; but he had left Calvinism, of which he incidentally remarks, "the higher you go, the better it is." In this was undoubtedly the chief point of his offending.

In thus laying the emphasis in theology on the relations of doctrine to life, Beecher was following in the line of those theologians of various types, both in Europe and America, who were coming into large influence, such as Ritschl in Germany, and the followers of Bushnell here. He could not refrain, however, from all metaphysics, for he was driven, when writing his *Life of Christ* (1871) to a certain theory of the person of Christ. Rejecting the ancient explanations of two natures, etc., he fell back on the idea of the essential identity of the divine and human natures. He writes:

"Man's nature and God's nature do not differ in kind, but in degree of the same attributes. Love in God is love in man. Justice, mercy, benevolence are not different in nature, but only in degree of power and excellence. . . . Christ was very God. Yet when clothed with a human body, and made subject through that body to physical laws, He was then a man . . . of the same mental nature, subject to precisely the same trials and temptations, only without the weakness of sin. A human soul is not something other and different from the Divine soul. It is as like it as the son is like his father. God is father, man is son. As God in our place becomes human,—such being the similarity of the essential natures,—so man in God becomes divine. Thus we learn not only to what our manhood is coming, but when the divine Spirit takes our whole condition upon Himself, we see the thoughts, the feelings, and, if we may so say, the private and domestic inclinations of God. What He was on earth, in His sympathies, tastes, friendships, generous familiarities, gentle condescensions, we shall find Him to be in heaven, only in a

profusion and amplitude of disclosure far beyond the earthly hints and glimpses." [6]

Thus God is like man in everything but limitation. Let Him take upon Himself a human body, and He must in consequence limit Himself. He thus becomes exactly like man. Jesus is therefore perfect man, although He has no human soul. The place of the soul is taken by God; but God as a human soul is indistinguishable from any other human soul.[7]

This theory met, of course, with no favourable reception from thinkers, whether liberal or orthodox. It was, when all is said in its favour that can be, nothing but the effort of a mind already committed to a certain view—that of Christ's divinity —to find some rational justification of it. It is substantially, except in denying the human soul, the kenotic theory which was elaborately worked out in Germany, and has found some favour in this country. But this, with all the remaining theories attempting to explain the paradox that a man was God, involves thought in hopeless contradictions. The divinity of Christ is a conclusion drawn by apostles and Church fathers from certain premises, partly objective and partly subjective, partly real and partly unreal. Its sole authority to control our beliefs is the authority of Scripture, and this is itself a conclusion drawn from unreal premises. Mr. Beecher should have rejected the idea as he already had rejected the authority of Scripture. By not doing so he hindered rather than promoted the onward movement of the times.

But he did not pause here. In the year 1885 he published a volume on *Evolution and Religion,* which was the first avowed and complete adoption of evolution in its full extent among our theologians, and attempted to restate our theology upon the basis of that principle.

The first sermon of this volume is on "The Signs of the Times." In the preface he says:

"Slowly, and through a whole fifty years, I have been under the influence, first obscurely, imperfectly, of the great doctrine of evolution. In my earliest preaching I discerned that the kingdom of heaven is a leaven, not only in the individual soul, but in the world;

the kingdom is as a grain of mustard seed; I was accustomed to call my crude notion a *seminal theory* of the kingdom of God in this world. Later I began to feel that science had struck a larger view, and that this unfolding of seed and blade and ear in spiritual things was but one application of a great cosmic doctrine, which underlay God's methods in universal creation, and was notably to be seen in the whole development of human society and human thought. That great truth—through patient accumulations of facts and marvellous intuitions of reason and luminous expositions of philosophic relation by men trained in observation . . . and in expression—has now become accepted throughout the scientific world. Certain parts of it yet are in dispute, but substantially it is the doctrine of the scientific world. And that it will furnish—nay, is already bringing—to the aid of religious truth as set forth in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ a new and powerful aid, fully in line with other marked developments of God's providence in this, His world, I fervently believe." [8]

He thus sets forth his own progress towards an acceptance of the theory. His sense of the duty of the pulpit towards it is expressed in the last paragraphs of his first sermon in these words:

"I say to all those clergymen who are standing tremulous on the edge of fear in regard to the great advance that God is making to-day: 'Inside and outside of His Church you are bound to be the interpreters of God's providence to His people. And while you are not to be rash, nor to make haste unduly, nor to mix dross with the pure gold, yet, on the other hand, you must be sure to meet the Lord when He comes in the air, when He moves in the providences of the world, when He is at work in natural laws, when He is living in philosophical atmospheres, when He is shining in great scientific disclosures, when He is teaching the human consciousness all around, you are bound, because you are ministers of His word, to meet the Lord, to welcome Him, to accept Him in all the new garments that He wears, and to see that the habiliments of Christ grow brighter and brighter, and nobler and nobler, from age to age, as He puts on righteousness and comes in all the glory of His kingdom towards us." [9]

A truly noble utterance, which needs careful attention in our own day.

In developing his idea of evolution, Beecher presents first the "evolution in human consciousness of the idea of God." The sermon, he says, "is simply an exposition of the truth that the knowledge of God is to be derived chiefly from the moral experiences and the moral intuitions of mankind—evolution in moral experiences as the ground and reason of evolution in the knowledge of God." "There must be some similarity to God developed in the human consciousness before the mind can understand the inspired enunciations respecting God's character and designs." The whole history of the developing knowledge of God among men shows this,—the early reference of the phenomena of nature each to a separate deity, then idolatry, then the ascriptions of attributes to the gods, constructing the idea of God after men's own character, and then that development in one race, the Hebrew people, among whom gradually grew that idea the history of which is in the Old Testament. Men were absolutely ignorant of the world, its forces and its resources, till they learned by experience, often painful and even disastrous, no knowledge being communicated to them from above. "So was it in regard to the moralities and esthetic elements of human life. . . ."

"Gradually, great natures, gathering the moralities and increasing the virtues of the human family in any age, fused them into a conception of divinity, and were inspired to do it, as God is wont to do. Great souls unconsciously attract to themselves the noblest ideas of the age, and by dramatic imagination give to them enlargement, and a body of words. They collected the already developed elements, and in some great and glorious hour God shot through them, as it were, the lightning of His own mind, until these great natures saw the principles, saw what the combination meant that had been gathered from alphabetic forms scattered here and there and everywhere. 'God spake to us in times past by holy men.' These were the men whose nature fitted them to gather together and perceive the real length and breadth and meaning of those scattered qualities that had been slowly evolved among the separate peoples around about, which they gave . . . therefore as authentic and definite teachings of God to men. *They were so!*" [10]

Thus Beecher enunciates with great clearness, the first of the line of our liberal thinkers to do it completely and well, the fundamental idea of all genuine liberalism, that religious truth is discovered in the same way as all other truth, by the experience and study of man, not discovered, however, without the providence and illumination of God, whether in the natural or the religious sphere.

The great body of this sermon and that of the two following is taken up with the discussion, in various aspects, of the Bible. In "The Two Revelations" he rises to another height of the fundamental principles of a sane and thorough liberalism in pointing out the fact that certainty in religion does not depend upon the possession of an infallible Scripture. The supposed uncertainty, immaturity, and changeableness of science is contrasted with the notorious divisions in a Church supposing itself to have such a Scripture.

"The whole Christian world for two thousand years, since the completion of the canons, has been divided up like the end of a broom into infinite splinters, quarrelling with each other as to what the Book did say and what it did mean." "The revelation of God in matter left to be interpreted by experience and experiment, has laid the foundations of science, and *has attained to a degree and scope of relative certainty such as has never been gained in any other field.* Now, the truths evolved by society are just as stable. You say you cannot tell what is right and what is wrong unless there is an absolute command of God for it, and unless it stands on the authority of God's declaration. But you can. God says, 'Thou shalt not steal.' You do not believe that stealing is bad because God said so; you believe it from what you know of the thing itself. . . . The things that we have found out from the human race by the experiment of living are the grand foundation of moral truths, and about these the sects do not disagree. To love God, to love our fellow men, to be faithful to obligations, to hold in honour all duties of fidelity, honesty, truth, purity, courage, self-denial, industry, frugality, regard for justice and for society—there is not a man who doubts the beauty and the authentic worth of these things." [11]

At the same time, Beecher was no depreciator of the Bible.

If he speaks of the rubbish and debris of the ages as found in its pages, no more glowing and thrilling descriptions of its excellencies can be found anywhere than are to be found in these sermons. He speaks of its description of the character of God as "at once a marvel and a theme of profound gratitude." "The Bible gives the only grand ideal of manhood known to literature. . . . A striking quality of the Bible is its power of inspiring men with the noblest desires. . . . It is the only book that develops God in human conditions. . . ." [12] He loved the Bible with a passion like that with which he loved Christ. If he may have been unduly influenced in this by his education and the habits of a long life, so much more is it to his credit that he saw those fundamental features of the situation which we have noted above, and which establish the foundations of a true liberalism.

This great message as to evolution was the last legacy of Henry Ward Beecher to his spiritual posterity. The clouds which a malignant and groundless attack upon his character spread over him for a time undoubtedly diminished very much the influence he might have had in the developing liberalism of later days. But Brooklyn, which knew him best, and Congregationalism by its great Council, and now the general verdict rendered in view of later revelations, have joined in his vindication, and he will hereafter be revered as truly great among all the prophets of the new age.

We come now to a writer who was to carry this line of thought still farther. The successor of Beecher in Plymouth pulpit, the editor of *The Christian Union,* Beecher's paper, which became more famous under the name of *The Outlook,* Lyman Abbott (1835-1922) was also the continuator of Beecher's theological influence. He was the son of Jacob Abbott, a Congregational minister, whose fame is chiefly that of an unexcelled writer for children and youth. Lyman Abbott was brought up, therefore, in the atmosphere of the New England divinity. He first studied law and began its practice in New York City, but gradually turned his attention in the direction

of theology, and was ordained to the ministry in 1860. From 1865 to 1869 he was pastor of the New England Church in New York, during which time he wrote his *Jesus of Nazareth,* a life of Christ which is entirely on the old platform of the inspiration and authenticity of the Gospels, and does not belong in a history of the liberal movement. His mind had not yet begun to act seriously upon the peculiar theological problems of the times. But Beecher's influence upon him was profound, and he early followed him in the adoption of the theory of evolution as a working hypothesis in theology as well as in science. He gradually became known as one of the foremost of the leaders in the new movement, and exerted a very wide influence through the columns of *The Outlook,* which was read in every denomination and by every minister progressively inclined, throughout the United States. Probably no man ever wielded in America so powerful an influence in the direction of a liberal theology. And he remained active to the end of a very long life.

His important contributions to the progress of a true philosophy of religion may be said to have begun with his book on *The Evolution of Christianity* (1892). Previously to the issue of this work, he was evidently feeling his way, not yet having attained clearness on many points. For example, in 1875 and following years, he had issued successive volumes of a commentary on the New Testament, in which he stands entirely on the old dogmatic apology for the Bible and its doctrines. His argument here for the inspiration of the New Testament is entirely *a priori.* His indifference to facts is illustrated by his reference of the Ten Commandments directly to Moses, "whose sole training was derived from a Hebrew mother, an Egyptian court, and the life of a Midianitish shepherd." [13] Miracles are implicitly and entirely accepted.[14] The argument for canonicity is purely from external considerations.[15] The internal evidence (from the resemblances and differences between *Matthew* and *Mark,* etc.) is entirely neglected, and apparently unknown. More specifically, as to the relations of the Gospels to each other, he explicitly rejects the supposition that "the narrators

made use of each other's work." [16] And he refers to an "oral gospel" as the original source of our Four Gospels.[17] Similarly, in the commentary on the *Acts,* he mentions various theories as to its authorship with the statement that there is no just reason for questioning the universal testimony of tradition.[18] He accepts absolutely the literal truth of the vision of Saul on the way to Damascus,[19] justifies the story about Ananias,[20] and even accepts without a question the story of the healings produced by handkerchiefs and aprons from the person of Paul in chap. xix, verse 12. Whatever may have been the thoughts destined later to lead him to modifications in these respects, it is evident that at this time Abbott was substantially on the old platform. Neither is there any evidence of change in the book, *Jesus of Nazareth* (1869). He assumes "that the Gospels are authentic narratives" and holds that "Christian faith in the Christian miracles is the truest rationalism." [21] He accepts the miracle at Cana, although befogging it by several "suppositions," which may indicate something of hesitation on his part. He also accepts the feeding of the five thousand, and the walking on the water, and he argues for the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus quite in the old style. It is "attested . . . by skeptical critics [viz., the disciples] hard to be convinced." [22]

The ten years following were, however, years of readjustment and progress. By 1886 he was ready with a volume, *In Aid of Faith,* in which he takes substantially the positions upon which he was to lay emphasis in all his future work, but there are evidences that his thought is not yet fully clarified. He still maintains strongly the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus, saying that "if there had been no Resurrection, there would be no Christianity." But his position is evidently changing, for he says, if "in the first century men believed in Christianity because they believed in the Resurrection, in the nineteenth century they believe in the Resurrection because they believe in Christianity." [23] He maintains two contradictory positions on this point, once saying that miracles are "necessary to the success of the mission" of Christ; and later saying that they "can never make an unbeliever a believer." Here is a repro-

duction of the old apology which made it the chief object of miracles to attest revelation, and almost in the same breath, a repudiation of that premise of the apologetic argument.[24] Their complete superfluousness is shown by the success of modern missions among the most ignorant heathen, for missionaries have never professed the miracle-working power. But Dr. Abbott already shows some hospitality towards the higher criticism of the Bible, and he rests his argument for the truth of the Bible not upon the old rational argument, although he believes this valid, but upon what the Reformers called the testimony of the Holy Spirit, viz., upon the fact that the Christian can come to the Bible with some personal and unshakeable knowledge of the truth gained from the spiritual experience wrought in him by the Spirit, and in the light of this he perceives the Bible to be true.[25] We may dismiss this volume without further attention, since, noble and excellent as it is in the pursuit of its special purpose, and full of brilliant passages, it represents the author's thought less perfectly than later works, to which we now pass.

In *The Evolution of Christianity* (1892) we first meet, as I think, the mature Abbott. From this time on he may change in minor particulars, but in the main his position is assumed, and he will not seriously depart from it. It is therefore important for us to ask in the most earnest fashion whether he has now gained a perception of the true challenge of the more radical forms of modern thought to the Christian Church, and whether he has given to it an adequate answer. And this is to ask whether he has rendered the full service which a thinker of his day was called upon to render, or whether his thought was still marked by the half-way, inconclusive, and misleading character which we have found in his predecessors.

That challenge was this.

We find that the reign of law is complete and universal. We do not believe that it is ever interrupted. We are prepared to go further and doubt whether it can be interrupted. We do not so much believe in a deity who confines himself to the scope of the laws which he has himself laid down, as believe rather that

the laws are the limit of his powers, that he is to be identified with his natural activities, and that there is no other God beyond humanity and matter in this world or beyond their equivalents in the universe at large. We therefore reject Christianity considered as an absolute religion, and we seek a larger and in many respects a different truth. An answer to that doubt, and a substitute for the view to which we find ourselves tending, must be given if the Christian Church is to hold its place in our scheme of life.

To answer that challenge a thinker must divest himself of all his beliefs, whether religious or merely philosophical, and begin at the beginning of all thinking. He must lay anew the very footing stones of the edifice of thought. And then he must construct that edifice, layer upon layer, committing no leaps and admitting no fallacies, till all is equally sound, and the whole furnishes the answer to the perplexities of the times. I find no evidence that Abbott ever performed this thorough and comprehensive labour, without which no complete success is possible.

His position, as stated in the preface of his *Evolution of Christianity,* was as follows:

"The teachers in the modern church may be divided into three parties: one is endeavouring to defend the faith of the fathers and the forms in which that faith was expressed; one repudiates both the faith and the forms; one holds fast to the faith, but endeavours to restate it in forms more rational and more consistent with modern habits of thought. To confound the second and third of these parties, because they agree in discarding ancient formularies, is a natural but a very radical blunder. The New Theology does not tend toward unfaith; it is, on the contrary, an endeavour to maintain faith by expressing it in terms which are more intelligible and credible. I hope that the reader of these pages will discover that I have not abandoned the historic faith of Christendom to become an evolutionist, but have endeavoured to show that the historic faith of Christendom, when stated in the terms of an evolutionary philosophy, is not only preserved, but is so cleansed of pagan thought and feeling as to be presented in a purer and more powerful form." [26]

That is to say, he has never gone to the bottom of the problem, put himself sympathetically in the place of the radical modern thinker, asked himself what is the ultimate and simplest truth, and begun at that point to construct an edifice of *truth,* regardless of the consideration whether it would turn out finally to be Christianity or not, but is an apologist for certain foregone conclusions from the beginning. It was certainly time in 1892, when the modern ferment of thought was more than thirty years old, to do more thorough work than this. But the conservative spirit of the Church was too much for even this independent thinker.

This failure in thoroughness is quite evident in the book before us. It professes the most entire acceptance of the theory of evolution; but it affords plain evidence that the author had never really understood evolution. It begins with Professor Le Conte's definition of evolution as "continuous progressive change, according to certain laws, and by means of resident forces," but at the most vital point, the true meaning of the word "resident," the author has fallen into a serious misunderstanding. It is evident from the beginning that, possibly misled by the emphasis which science places upon the unity of force, our author thinks himself justified in identifying these resident forces with the immanent God. Speaking of the continuous progressive change in theology which is to be found in the history of Christianity, he says that "the cause of this change, or these changes, has been a force, not foreign to the man himself, but residing in him." [27] In the mouth of a theologian, this resident force can mean nothing but God; and further reading of the book shows that this is his meaning. At a later point we read:

"This new conception of God as immanent in nature is necessarily accompanied by a new conception of law and miracles. Rather, we are going back to the New Testament conception and definition of miracles. They are no longer regarded as violations of natural law, or even as suspensions of natural law. Indeed, in strictness of speech, in the view of this philosophy, there are no natural laws to be violated or suspended. There is only one force, that is God; law

is but the habit of God's action; miracles are but the manifestation of His power and presence in unexpected actions, demonstrating the existence of an intelligent will and power superior to that of man. . . . The control of the physical by the spiritual, and therefore of the universe by its God, is sometimes manifested by unexpected or unusual acts of power and wisdom for spiritual ends. These are miracles. Whether any particular event, reported as such a witness of divine power, actually took place is purely and simply a question of evidence. The New Theology has no hesitation, therefore, in accepting some miracles and rejecting others: in accepting, for example, the Resurrection of Jesus as a fact sufficiently authenticated; doubting the resurrection of the saints at the death of Christ, . . . as insufficiently authenticated; and disbelieving the historical character of the Jonah legend of the great fish, as not authenticated at all." [28]

But the immanent God in nature is not at all what science means by her "resident forces." The resident forces of an object in the material world, such as a stone, are the forces that make up that object. Disturb them and you destroy the object. They are electricity, operating in the atoms of which constitute it; the chemical affinities which have determined the concrete substances of which the stone is composed, as for example, mica, feldspar, etc., in granite; the forces of cohesion which give it physical stability, etc., etc. These forces are under certain laws and they always operate according to those laws. The laws prescribe a circle out of which the given body cannot step. The rigidity of these laws is not affected by the idea of an immanent God. Should they be reduced to one force, as science is inclined to do, that one force, nevertheless, expresses itself in these distinct ways, and in no other, and will continue to express itself exactly as it does now, so long as this stone exists as the identical stone which it is. That one force of which the others are forms will never pass out of the limits which it set to itself in introducing these forces, which appear like subordinate forces, into the object, or, to speak more accurately, in constituting the object of them. And this method of creation and of operation is not confined to the unconscious

world of matter. Man is no exception to this scheme. His body may seem infinitely more complex than the stone, but it is composed of definite forces operating in definite ways which are never changed. Some of them are chemical forces, exactly parallel to what obtains in the inorganic world. Conceive them merely as God's habits of action, as Dr. Abbott conceives them, and legitimately does: those habits are nevertheless unchangeable. The law of reproduction which gives rise to evolution is that the offspring should be like the parent, but not exactly like it, the law of variation. The result is that a cow never produces a deer, nor a woman an angel, an acorn never a maple, just as a cask of water never becomes wine, and the revolution of the world upon its axis never stops that the sun may stand still. The same is true of the remaining laws of the body. The laws regulating innervation are precise and unvarying. If a man has lost a leg, another never grows, as in the case of some of the lower animals. Though these forces may be described as the immanent God, it does not follow that at any moment something may be done within a human body, or in its relations to the material world, different from the regular products of these forces. They are "resident forces" in the sense that nothing outside themselves, in other words nothing outside of the body itself, not even anything immanent in the body but not identical with these forces, or anything in any way transcendent to them, will disturb them in their operation or produce anything different from what they would produce without such a force, which is extraneous, in the sense of natural science, however immanent. Every stone, every human body, every man, constitutes in a very particular and definite way, a closed circle. It is this closed circle of forces, constituting the body in question, that is meant by "resident" forces. Now, Dr. Abbott thinks that God's immediate action in revivifying the body of Jesus after it was really dead, would be no violation of the laws of nature, or even a suspension of them. It would be a violation according to the evolutionary understanding of the world, because the law is that when once certain forces have ceased to operate in a human body and it is dead, these forces are spent

and their work finished. They are never set in motion again. In fact forces which are incompatible with them or destructive of them are immediately set in operation. The laws of decay begin immediately to operate. Into this closed circle of forces God could never break without nullifying innumerable laws. So in the case of the miracle of Cana. If it had taken place, it would have involved the creation of chemical elements, such as carbon, and of new supplies of oxygen and hydrogen for new combinations of the same with this carbon, which "resident forces" have no conceivable power to effect. It would be a piece of violence, a breàk into a closed circle, a thing involving a totally new attitude on God's part towards the universe, a destruction of the record of Himself which He has made in the invariable laws of the world. We should no longer have means of finding out what God really is. "Resident forces" are God's presence in the world in an impersonal and unalterable way, quite different from Dr. Abbott's conception of that presence.

Hence such statements of Dr. Abbott's as those already quoted, that "in strictness of speech, . . . there are no natural laws," [29] and "unusual acts of power and wisdom for spiritual ends . . . are miracles," indicate a departure from evolution which will render all his work upon its apologetic, and much on its constructive side incorrect and ineffective. To one entirely conversant with evolution, the following quotation is enough to condemn this side of his efforts absolutely:

> "Evolution is the development of any object towards the fulfillment of the end of its being; and by a force resident in the object itself. What I may become depends in the last analysis upon what is the power within me—the power which by my free acceptance I *take,* and *so cause to be* within me." [30]

We cannot pause upon the many felicitous turns in which this book abounds, such as, "There is danger in skepticism, but there is greater danger in shams." [31] We must ask how our author is helping on the cause of freedom, and this question touches particularly upon his discussions of the Bible and the person of Christ.

Dr. Abbott's acceptance of the general idea of evolution—that it is a progressive change—as applied to the Bible is complete, although his conservatism operates to hinder its full application. His start is somewhat narrow, for he says that—

"The question . . . to which I invite the reader's attention . . . is not whether the Bible is an inspired literature and contains a divine revelation. To deny this is to deny Christianity. He who disbelieves in the Bible as the text-book of revealed religion is not in his belief a Christian, whatever he may be in his character. He is, properly speaking, a theist." [32]

It would have been better to say that every man possessing the same attitude towards truth which Christ occupied, whatever might be his success or failure in attaining it, was a Christian. But this false start does not altogether invalidate his subsequent work. He views the question before the Church as a radical one. It is not one as to whether there are not some "specks of sandstone in the marble," but "how we are to regard inspiration and revelation." And these he regards in a truly evolutionary way, as having come gradually, through the spiritual experience of good men, who from age to age obtained more and more correct ideas of God and His requirements, resulting not in an infallible book constituting a perfect standard for faith, but in one of great and precious helpfulness. His condemnation of the idea of Biblical infallibility is so annihilating that it deserves a full quotation.

"An infallible book is a book which without any error whatever conveys truth from one mind to another mind. In order that the Bible should be infallible, the original writers must have been infallibly informed as to the truth; they must have been able to express it infallibly; they must have had a language which was an infallible vehicle for the communication of their thoughts; after their death their manuscripts must have been infallibly preserved and infallibly copied; when translation became necessary, the translators must have been able to give an infallible translation; and, finally, the men who receive the book must be able infallibly to apprehend what was thus infallibly understood by the writers, infallibly communicated by them, infallibly preserved, infallibly copied, and infallibly trans-

lated. Nothing less than this combination would give us to-day an infallible Bible; and no one believes that this infallible combination exists. Whether the original writers infallibly understood the truth or not, they had no infallible vehicle of communicating it: their manuscripts were not infallibly preserved or copied or translated; and the sectarian differences which exist to-day afford an absolute demonstration that we are not infallibly able to understand their meaning." [33]

In pursuing the subject of the Bible, Abbott calls attention to the evident fact that it is a growth, a collection of books written at different times in the history of Israel, gathered together somewhat slowly, and assuming its present form only many years after the beginning of the Christian era. In four aspects of the Bible is its evolution most easily traced. *Historically,* it is evidently an evolution, for the various books of which it is composed were written at different times over a very long period, and *Genesis* in particular shows signs of being formed by the combination of two or more distinct narratives. Some of the accounts are founded upon current traditions. The facts related were not supernaturally revealed, but gleaned from various sources. The divineness of the book consists in its "perception of the spiritual meaning of life's great drama." *As a book of laws,* it is largely a reshaping of previous religious institutions. Through it there runs a contrast between the prophetical and the priestly or ecclesiastical tendencies. The *moral laws* begin with the Ten Commandments, an imperfect standard, which Christ replaces with a new law, that of sacrificial love. And as *a revelation of God* the Bible grows ever clearer, from its first dim understandings of monotheism and the divine attributes to the full conception of God as a Spirit, who is "our Father." In these positions Abbott faithfully reflects the hesitating acceptance of the results of Biblical criticism which was all that ecclesiastical conservatism could then admit. When it was already pretty well understood that the histories of Abraham, Moses, and their like were written from four to five hundred years after the supposed events occurred, it was a feat of conservative steadfastness to ascribe to

these figures any historical reality at all. Of the true relation of the sacrificial system to the history, of its very late formulation in the elaborate system presented in *Leviticus,* and the totally human character of its origin and development, he shows no knowledge. Few of his contemporaries possessed it. The point which he had reached will be readily seen by the following quotation, which will also represent the liberal character of his views in spite of his critical limitations. His intuitions were the best part of his theological equipment, and they rarely permitted him to go far astray in presenting religious truth. He writes:

"The Christian evolutionist, then, does not see in the Levitical code a divine authority for a sacrificial system to be maintained in attenuated forms, as in a bloodless sacrifice of the mass, or a perpetuated phrase in a creed. On the contrary, he takes account of the notion universally prevailing among pagan peoples, and not yet eliminated from Christian lands, that God must be appeased by pain and approached by sacrifice; he sees in the Levitical code a permission of sacrifices, because their abolition could not have been comprehended by a primitive and spiritually uneducated people; but he also sees that these sacrifices are not so much commanded, or commended, as restrained, limited, and diminished; he sees prophet after prophet declaring, either that they are utterly valueless, or valuable only as the expression of religious feeling and purpose; he sees Christ, even when in close proximity to the temple, disregarding the sacrificial system altogether in His treatment of repentant sinners; he sees Paul declaring that we need no other sacrifice and no other mercy seat than Christ. He believes that the sacrificial system represents a profound spiritual truth, the truth that it costs to forgive sin." [34]

For Dr. Abbott's proposals as to the person of Christ, the second question we were to ask in reference to this book, it will be better to transfer ourselves at once to a later book, *The Theology of an Evolutionist* (1897). True, the indications of his position are not vague nor insufficient in the earlier volume, but they are clearer and more decisive in the latter. It follows directly from his conception of "resident forces." God is im-

manent in all men. None of His operations in man, from the supply of that force which sends the blood coursing through the veins, to the grace which helps the tried Christian to withstand temptation, is essentially different from any other. God in Christ can be nothing substantially different from God in any other man, for all of God is present in every man. The difference will be in degree only. And thus it will be as proper to speak of the incarnation of God in humanity as in Christ. Dr. Abbott makes precisely these statements as to the nature of Christ. Listen to his own words:

"Does this divinity in Christ differ in kind, or only in degree, from the divinity in men? There are differences in degree so great that they become equivalent to a difference in kind; but, with this qualification, I answer unreservedly, the difference is in degree and not in kind. . . . Our divinity is the same in kind as Christ's divinity, because it is the same in kind as God's divinity; because there are not, and cannot be two kinds of divinity. . . . The consummation of evolution, the consummation of redemption . . . the consummation of this long process of divine manifestation, which began in the day when the morning stars sang together, will not be until the whole human race becomes what Christ was, until the Incarnation so spreads out from the One Man of Nazareth that it fills the whole human race, and all humanity becomes an incarnation of the divine, the infinite and all-loving Spirit. What Jesus was, humanity is becoming."[35]

This "divinity," however, is nothing but a divinity of moral attributes, such as patience, hope, righteousness, love, which are the only ones which Dr. Abbott discusses.[36] His doctrine is, therefore, when stated in plain, unvarnished terms, that Christ, so far as His nature is concerned, was a man. He ought to say so, and the reaction of this opinion upon his conception of the Fourth Gospel ought to have led him further in his departure from the old theology. But here he paused.

These views of Christ immediately gained a large degree of acceptance. Young men began to come forward for ordination who spoke by preference of God's "indwelling" in Christ, and thought it differed from that which Christians receive only in "kind." Thus the Bushnellian influence reached its culmina-

tion, so far as Christology was concerned, and inasmuch as Dr. Whiton's book on the Trinity, *Gloria Patri,* which presented the same view, appeared in the same year as Dr. Abbott's *The Evolution of Christianity,* 1892, we may select this year as the date at which the Liberal theology became largely unitarian, although the conservative pull upon the affections as well as the intellect, and no small portion of the old antagonism against [the] "separated brethren," prevented a frank acknowledgement of the fact. It was also in 1892 that Dr. Gladden presented the same view of the person of Christ, but he also did not speak out with the clarion clearness with which the cause of theological progress demanded he should speak. The influence of the past, joined with pastoral fear of too much disturbing the minds of men with bad results, was still supreme. Particularly was the influence of Bushnell, which these three writers so strongly felt, essentially unfavourable to a greater break with the past. He, too, for no ignoble reasons, had not been frank in stating himself so clearly as to place him precisely where he was. Indeed, he did not always know himself.

Dr. Abbott has, however, scarcely put himself in the position in regard to the criticism of the Scriptures which he ought to have taken in 1897, when this latter book, *The Theology of an Evolutionist,* was written. The criticism of the New Testament had advanced to a much more radical view of the origin and date of the Gospels than he admitted. He regards the Resurrection of Christ as "among the best attested facts of ancient history." [37] He bases this view on the supposition that "in all four [gospels] we have substantially the testimony of the eyewitnesses themselves" to this event, "not the product of a later tradition." [38] He concedes that "if this, their testimony, stood alone, it would probably be disregarded by the great majority of mankind as unimportant, if not incredible. But it does not stand alone." [39] And then he brings forward the Christian Sunday,—which he thinks could not have originated without the Resurrection!—and the Christian Church, which St. Paul declared was founded upon the reality of that Resurrection, and likewise Christian civilization. This is mere declama-

tion. It simply refuses to ask what are the facts as to this witness and these institutions.

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1. F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology,* p. 432 ff.
2. H. W. Beecher, *Sermons,* Harper's edition of 1869, pp. 17, 29.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 75 ff.
4. "Crowned Suffering," *ibid.,* p. 161 ff.
5. Text in Lyman Abbott, *Henry Ward Beecher* (1903), p. 429 ff.
6. H. W. Beecher, *Life of Christ,* p. 52 f.
7. Beecher starts from the same idea as Whiton (see Ch. IV), but they work out their idea in directions precisely reversed. Human nature is to both the same as the divine, except that it is limited. To Beecher, God takes on Himself flesh, and thus limits Himself, and thus becomes a man: to Whiton, the man Jesus through His moral perfection bursts His limitations and becomes God. In both cases it is an abuse of the term "God."
8. H. W. Beecher, *Evolution and Religion,* p. 3 f.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 24.
10. *Ibid.,* pp. 26, 30 ff, 34 f.
11. *Ibid.,* pp. 47, 71. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
12. *Ibid.,* p. 59 f.
13. Lyman Abbott, *Commentary on Matthew,* p. 15.
14. *Ibid.,* p. 15.
15. *Ibid.,* p. 23.
16. *Ibid.,* p. 36.
17. *Ibid.,* p. 37.
18. Lyman Abbott, *Commentary on the Acts,* p. 13.
19. *Ibid.,* p. 108 ff.
20. *Ibid.,* p. 65.
21. Lyman Abbott, *Jesus of Nazareth,* p. v.
22. *Ibid., passim.*
23. Lyman Abbott, *In Aid of Faith,* p. 89.
24. *Ibid.,* p. 89 f.
25. *Ibid.,* p. 135 ff.
26. Lyman Abbott, *The Evolution of Christianity,* p. iii f.
27. *Ibid.,* pp. 1, 4.
28. *Ibid.,* p. 112 ff.
29. And yet he says (p. 134) God's "laws are absolute, and not to be broken"!
30. *Ibid.,* p. 233. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
31. *Ibid.,* p. 36.
32. *Ibid.,* p. 27.
33. *Ibid.,* p. 36 f.
34. *Ibid.,* p. 50 f.
35. Lyman Abbott, *The Theology of an Evolutionist,* p. 73 ff.
36. *Ibid.,* p. 73.
37. *Ibid.,* p. 155.
38. *Ibid.,* p. 156.
39. *Ibid.,* p. 156.

VI

GEORGE A. GORDON

AMID all the confusion of the stormy years ere the theory of evolution was accepted and became determinative of the course of the developing theological liberalism, there was quietly working at his desk and among his people in the principal church in the Congregational metropolis and thus elaborating a system of theological thought in living contact with men, one who was to prove the most thorough and vital thinker of the whole history, George A. Gordon, minister of the Old South, Boston. He stands among the rest like the Matterhorn among the surrounding mountains,—that peak alone, lofty, well-nigh inaccessible, but grand and majestic in its incomparable beauty. A poet essentially, and a thinker after the manner of the poets, a man of insight and vision rather than a slow and slavish logician, he is one of those rare spirits whom he bids us cherish as the choicest possessions of the world, who, whatever they may lack in system, completeness, or accuracy of thought, possess the spirit and the endowment of the prophet. He thus became not only a great preacher but a great teacher of preachers, and one of the great line of creative thinkers among Congregationalists, of whom Jonathan Edwards was the first.

Dr. Gordon's preparation for the ministry was irregular, but in some respects the better for this. Born in Scotland, he came to the United States in his eighteenth year, graduated from Bangor Seminary in his twenty-fifth, and then, after a year in the ministry in a home missionary church in Maine, entered Harvard College and graduated in his twenty-ninth year. And, after two years in the church at Greenwich, Connecticut, he entered, in 1884, upon his life pastorate in Boston. Whatever his disadvantages in entering Bangor Seminary may have been, he acquired there a thorough knowledge of the New England

Theology under the instruction of Professor William M. Barbour, a favourite pupil of Professor E. A. Park, and a good introduction to Greek. "He was eager to know something more of the great world of thought, and to be guided among its mazes by candid and competent teachers." At Harvard he was particularly attracted to Greek and philosophy, and, because of his maturity and high philosophical and theological discipline at Bangor, far better prepared to understand these branches than the immature youth by whom he was surrounded in college. He emerged from this study well acquainted with the currents and the meaning of contemporary thought, and above all possessed of that supreme gift which Harvard College gave to its comprehending students, a fearless confidence in the truth joined with the courage of his convictions. Settled in Greenwich, he soon came under the necessity of bringing out of the conflict which he perceived between what he had been taught at Bangor and at Harvard, a working and preachable theology. He succeeded here in arriving at certain ultimates, which he was later to set forth in elaborate form, which made the great truths about which he could group his teaching in the pulpit. Arrived in Boston, he studied and preached, enlarged and matured his thought, and finally, in 1897, he began that series of books by which he extended his influence far beyond the limits of his parish, and which it will now be our duty to follow throughout. In them all are manifest not only those mental characteristics of the poet and prophet already noted, but that abounding and immortal youthfulness, and that mighty enthusiasm for humanity, which, conjoined with the mystic's deep meditation upon God, constitute his dominant and exceptional impelling forces.[1]

A manifestly autobiographical fragment in a later book enables us to trace in outline the progress of his thought during the period of his earliest struggles for a sound theology which should be in accord with his own time. In college, under the guidance of eminent teachers, he sees that at many points traditional theology and historical philosophy "are in dead an-

tagonism; and he thinks that the world should treat them alike. It does not seem fair to expose philosophy to the fire of criticism and to cover theology from that ordeal." He is thus thrown into an internal controversy with himself which will evidently require much time for its progress to a satisfactory conclusion; but meantime,—

"there is the imperious cry of the spirit that requires instant attention. Accordingly [he] looks about him for a resource, a city of refuge, until these calamities are overpast. Here is the New Testament in Greek. In the New Testament, here are the words of Jesus. They are not always certainly ascertainable, embedded as they are in the reports of disciples; and yet they are, for the most part, clear and authentic. Rest here for a while. Take this spiritual discipline under the unquestionable Master of the soul. Listen to the address that He makes to life. Brood over this surpassing ethical idealism that dates itself from the heart of the ethical God. Consider this Divine Man as the prophet of the Highest, struggle to lay to heart His wisdom, merge manhood in discipleship to Him, lift up the spirit in the joy of an infinite moral hope, bend low that all the waves and billows of His cleansing grace may go over you; do this and wait. . . . And under the shelter of this Presence let the philosophic and theologic discipline go on." [2]

The result was that, for a time, "both theology and philosophy were gone." But the faith, "the Christian faith received into his blood," abode with him, "living, tempestuous, invincible." He first arrived at three definite beliefs which served as "form to this faith": 1. Man is responsible for his life. His power over himself is indubitable. He is the maker of his character. By the grace of the universe or against it, here is fact. 2. Jesus was the supreme master of Himself, and He is on that account, the supreme master of all who aspire to put life under the sovereignty of the moral ideal. 3. On the whole, the universe sides with the man who sides with righteousness,—the most revolutionary of the three.

These were Gordon's first positions, but evidently he could not remain here. He must go on to more truth and more comprehensive truth. But he has already made one "great dis-

covery. He has hit upon the truth that the spiritual world is unattainable except in and through experience."

"The primary source of theology is man, individual, social, historic, under inevitable and everlasting moral organization. This organism of man in the spirit has operated in a twofold way. It has been working under the law of sin and death; and this vast and lurid chapter in the experience of mankind is momentous in its concern. Man has gone into activity under the law of the spirit of life in Christ; and here there is a world of institutions, customs, literatures, to be studied as symbolic of life. Finally there is the Bible, the supreme expression of the supreme spiritual experience of mankind. In and under the physical life of the race, under its sin and shame, under its righteousness and hope, under the Church contemporaneous and historic, under the Old Testament and the New, is the total spiritual experience of man. That is the deep into which, through every symbol, the theologian must look. That is the form of God, the presence of the Infinite with which we must reckon." [3]

Under the guidance of this primary principle of theological method he now went forward to the first great formulation of his theology in certain "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith," which formed the substance of his preaching and the creative *foci* of his growing theology from the beginning of his Boston ministry. He did not publish his statement of these ultimates for nearly twenty years;[4] but, since they lay always beenath his writing and preaching, it will conduce to a clearer understanding of his progress if we pass immediately to the book bearing this title, returning at later points to earlier publications.

In an introductory chapter, he vindicates the place of the preacher as a theologian, calling attention to "his closeness to religious experience," "his stimulus to creative thought," his necessary occupation with "things essential," and the soundness of his perspective. Preaching is also a "test of ideas"; and the preacher has, accordingly, a superior opportunity as a thinker. If this was a vindication of his own right to discuss theology in a theological seminary (the book originated in lectures given at Yale), the subsequent pages rendered such a

vindication unnecessary. And it was equally unnecessary when one looked about on the great theological activity of the times, or back upon the long line of preachers who had been the creators of the so-called New England Theology—Edwards, Bellamy, Hopkins, Burton, Emmons, Taylor—all of whom had been pastors, and only one of whom, Taylor, had also been a professor. He himself says, and says well:

"When we have said, and said truly, of a writer that he is less systematic, less learned, less mature in his thinking, less closely reasoned in his opinions than we could wish, than we can find in another, we cancel all these defects when we add that in his utterance we discover original vision of divine things. The seer, the witness of God and His doings, is of superlative value for theology; and into this mood of beholding, the competent preacher is pressed by the whole strength of his vocation." [5]

In a second chapter, still introductory, after making the distinction between religion and theology, and reviewing the theological tradition of the Church, he presents the situation of the contemporary world. A new science has arisen which is to be mastered; a new Bible has been discovered; and new philosophies have to be encountered. How comprehensive was his view of the change required in our view of the Bible may be seen in the following extract:

"To break up the Old Testament into history and poetry and legend, to see in the history a predominant homiletical purpose, and to correct one sacred historian by another; to canvass the circle of prophetic ideas, and to discover limits to their availability for the modern world; to hint that the apostles were not always in absolute agreement with each other; to intimate that Paul becomes deeper and more adequate in his views as he grows older; to cherish the suspicion of a possible divergence in thought between the New Testament writers and Jesus Christ, appeared to be the signal of doom for the Bible as the word of God." [6]

He thus takes his stand uncompromisingly with the results of the higher criticism. It would be too much to say that he is always consistent in adhering to them. In very many cases he

seems to employ the Scriptures exactly as those do who accept the idea of plenary inspiration. He seems to use the Fourth Gospel, for example, precisely as if it gave an accurate, verbatim report of the words of Jesus. But closer attention to his thought will show that this is not really the case. In one instance he quotes the text, "I am the Light of the World," as if it voiced the most exalted claims for Jesus and carried their complete establishment by its own inherent authority; but the subsequent treatment of the theme shows that his reasoning is, after all, purely rational.[7] He has in fact broken with the idea of Biblical *authority,* and transferred the Bible from that position in his thinking to the position of the record of a God-guided historical religious experience.[8] This will, I believe, become perfectly plain as we proceed in our study.

In this book he discusses, therefore, not the topics of a conventional and somewhat meticulous theology, but the great ideas which should govern a preacher's work, the "ultimates" which he should keep continually in mind, and these are: (1) Personality, Humanity, the Historical Ultimate, (2) the Religious (Jesus Christ), (3) the Universal (the Moral Universe), and (4) the Absolute (God). Its great service was, it may be said, to set forth in eloquent and convincing ways the fact that there are such great ultimates, permanent amid the confusion of present controversy. But the detailed discussions should not be neglected, containing, as they do, many interesting and powerful courses of argument. And, as Gordon himself says, "the scheme advanced . . . is reasonably modest. It is . . . founded upon a valid conception, the incommensurateness between Christian reality and Christian intelligence whose parallel is the incommensurateness between the material universe and science. . . . [It] identifies theology with fundamental aspects of reality. . . . The reorganization of the Christian intellect in thought . . . should be in fundamental thought." [9]

The "individual ultimate," which Gordon first discusses, is the human soul, the argument for the real and distinct existence of which is still timely. This is substantially based upon the

combining power of thought, "the unifying function of the mind," [10] upon which Lotze laid so much emphasis (*"das beziehende Wissen"*). The "social ultimate," humanity, is defined by "the significant mark of man . . . the capacity for a life ordered in moral reason," and as being covered in its entirety by "God's fatherly purpose." [11] Here occurs one of Gordon's most constant thoughts, that "God is on the side of every soul that he has made; he is for it, and not against it, forever and ever." [12] And there is sprinkled throughout this chapter, and the whole volume, pungent apology at many points, here especially upon immortality. The "historical ultimate" is the kingdom of God established among men, towards which both evolution and the governing hand of God in history are tending.

Important for his own thought and for the work of the preacher as these position are, it is in the fourth ultimate, the religious ultimate, Jesus Christ, that we are to look for whatever Dr. Gordon has to contribute to the progress of religious thought in his time. It is the centre of burning interest to him, and the division of theology upon which he lavished his labour and his literary discussion. In the two doctrines of the Trinity and Christology he shows most clearly his connection with Christian history, although his positions are by no means identical with those of the ancient creeds. His own religious life centred in his personal and adoring devotion to Jesus Christ, and in the justification of this religious attitude and in its presentation in all the fulness of his personal loyalty to his Master, he rises to his greatest heights of reason and of eloquence.

We may as well present here his summary of the nature of Jesus and of the Incarnation—a word which he is careful to retain—by quoting the following passage which substantially covers the whole ground:

"The kinship between God and man is a fundamental position of faith to-day. It is a living and fruitful truth. In virtue of it we are able to discover in God an eternal humanity, and in human existence an infinite significance. It cannot be said too often or with too great emphasis that there is between God and every man an inseparable association; *that there is in every man a genuine incar-*

nation of God. But the obliteration of the possibility of distinction in the association between God and man is against the facts of religious history, and it is against the facts in the record of the life of Jesus. His soul is easily seen to be the sovereign soul, the soul of unique and unapproachable distinction. And this soul of unique distinction has assigned to it a unique vocation. That vocation is that Jesus serve as the supreme organ of the Eternal Son in God. The need of this vocation on the divine side and on the human, the reality of this vocation in the life of Jesus, and the sovereign distinction of Jesus in the fulfillment of His vocation, are positions that belong together and that support one another. The ancient insights into the monumental meaning of the life of Jesus must not be allowed to fade from our faith; they must be kept and adjusted to the modern insights into the divine worth of man as man; insights for which we are indebted to a new appreciation of Christianity in the light of the general progress of society." [13]

It will, however, serve a valuable purpose if we here digress from the direct discussion of the book in hand to consider Dr. Gordon's treatment of Christology elsewhere. After his earlier thought had considerably matured, he published in 1895 a book entitled *The Christ of To-day*.[14] In this book, recognizing the new world into which the Church has come, which is a new world of faith, as well as one in respect to space and time, he states "the total problem" of the day in the following words:

"A Kingdom of the Spirit has risen in our day, appropriating the wealth of all faiths, grounding itself upon a noble philosophy, isolating itself from particular times and places, relying for support upon no history, however sacred, and proposing to stand in its own strength against the whole hostile world of the actual. The question must arise whether the grand historic faith in Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God can cover this new world,—whether His sovereignty may be extended over it, whether its one great need is not the acknowledgment of His eternal authority. This is my profound belief. . . . The escape of our human world into the new spaces and the new times, the expansion of the material order to infinity and the extension of history to eonian periods, the gathering of the nations into the consciousness of a contemporaneous humanity, and the mighty growth of the Kingdom of the Spirit, are blessings for

which it is impossible to be too thankful. Mankind have been brought out into a large place, and the daily vision is of broad rivers and streams. But unless Christ shall be installed over this new world, it will simply be a larger and more splendid corpse than the old. Over the total worlds of space, and time, and present humanity, and the spirit, He must be recognized as supreme; and these kingdoms with all their glory, if that glory is not to fade into a dream and the highest hope of mankind is not to be blasted, must become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." [15]

If it be asked what is Dr. Gordon's authority for such claims in behalf of Christ and for such a statement of the problem of the day, the answer is that he was here drawing upon the Christian experience which he innumerable times declares to be the primary source from which theology is to be drawn. He goes back here to the results of those morning half-hours which he spent at Harvard upon "the close and inward study of the Gospels." They were continued "for months, for years, for decades."

"A section of a chapter in the Gospels was carefully read in the Greek. The topography present or implied in the portion read was minutely and vividly imagined; the scene including the face of nature and the light and colour that rested on it, the groups of human beings, their needs, quest, distress, as they stood out against the national life, and the figure of the Master, were reproduced as clearly and simply as possible. Then came for consideration the wisdom, influence and power of the Teacher and Healer. What He was said to have done was noted, and the question came, Can He do anything now? Can He help a soul to find light, certainty, wisdom, moral security and progress? He was described as a Teacher sent to His people from God. Could He lead a seeker after God, in the nineteenth century, to His goal? . . . Grammar, lexicon and history must lead the way; the sifted data must be seen in perspective; the unessential, such as the miracles, and especially that which certain scholars to-day make fundamental, all apocalyptic words, must be disregarded, not as necessarily untrue, but whether true or false, as unintelligible. Upon this ethical, ideal, spiritual residuum, imagination was applied, as the organ of sympathy and love. Brooding inquiry took the place of dialectic, the

passion to understand of the desire to criticize. The result was the surprise of our student's vexed life. . . . Slowly there rose the strange, mysterious person of the incomparable friend of man and Prophet of the Soul of the universe, till our student thus led felt it to be not presumption but the simple, august truth to cry out in his joy, 'I have seen the Lord face to face.'" [16]

This leaf from the spiritual history of the writer is the explanation of the many glowing passages in which the person and the value of Christ are the recurring theme, such as, for example, the following:

"Everywhere the vision is opening to the reality of His presence in the world. The old Christ conception is becoming new in the current thoughts, insights, and appreciations of the time. There is a gathering of discernment toward this great centre. No one knew what direct appeal to God meant to the men of the sixteenth century until Luther's words revealed it, and few men to-day have any adequate sense of what Christ means to the world. Some day, some voice or book will make the world aware of what is even now lying deep in its heart. Christ is the creator of our human world. The worth of the individual, the reality of social union, the sanctity of home, the infinite meaning of love, the eternal validity of our ideas of righteousness, freedom, and God, all the ultimate realities of our human world, are the creation of Christ. We are born into His world; we wake and sleep, work and rest, rejoice and weep, live and die in it." [17]

"It is almost as impossible to think of God and man and human society through any other medium than Christ as it is to look up at the stars, or abroad upon the earth, in any other way than through the world's enfolding atmosphere. Our whole thought of God and man; our entire working philosophy of life; our modes of intellectual vision, types of feeling, habits of will; our instinctive, customary, rational, emotional, institutional, and social existence,—is everywhere encompassed and interpenetrated by Christ. His empire over our civilization is complete in this sense, that it exists and expands only under His power, and cannot define or describe itself except in terms of His teaching and character. We are here under the shadow of an Infinite Name; we are living and dying in the heart of an enfolding Presence. We are compelled to acknowledge that the secret moulding energy of our entire civilization is the mind of Christ. It

is out of this consciousness of the indwelling, wide-spreading, and overruling mind of Christ that the belief comes in His essential deity." [18]

"Thinkers are everywhere converging upon the conclusion that in God there is the Eternal Pattern for our race. And what is this Eternal Pattern, or Prototype, but the Son of Man of the Synoptic Gospels, the Only-begotten of the Fourth Gospel, the Mediator of the Pauline Epistles, the High Priest without descent, with neither beginning of days nor end of years, of the letter to the Hebrews, the God of God, Light of Light, begotten not made, of the Nicene Creed, who for us men and our salvation came down, was made flesh, and became man?" [19]

"The finality of the Gospel grows out of Christ's comparison. For its own purpose there is nothing better than light. Light at its best is the final thing in that line. One can ask for nothing other, for nothing higher, for nothing more. The world rolling in the flood of light is in that aspect of it absolutely perfect. And beyond the teaching of Jesus thought cannot go. A God better than the Father of Christ is for man inconceivable. A diviner interpretation of human existence than that of Christ is unimaginable. The great ideas of Christ—the kingdom of God, eternal life, the universe as essentially moral, truth as ultimately personal in man, in Christ Himself, and in God,—represent not only the highest reach of spiritual intelligence, but also the height that has no beyond. Anything better than the Gospel [of Christ] is inconceivable. A higher or greater spirit than Jesus Christ is unthinkable." [20]

"We cannot go beyond Him. Our human universe is a Christian universe. The best in nature, the best in human history, the best in the hope of the world, is but the image of Christ. Thus, so far as we have a God, Christ is in very truth our God. We baptize the Creative Being behind nature and behind human history and life into the name of Christ. . . . A nature with a hint of Christ in it, a humanity capable of putting on the form of His love, a universe gathering up itself into Christ as its head,—that is our best thinking. It may be true or it may be false, but it is what we all do when we do our best." [21]

It must, then, be clearly held in mind, when we come to the study of Gordon's efforts to give an adequate statement to his Christology, that he starts with the unshakeable conviction that

Jesus was unique in His relation to God and in that to man, and unique also in Himself. His uniqueness and His magnitude as an historical person are the two things to be explained, or, at least, adequately placed in our scheme of things, that is, in our theology. As he says: "Christology is . . . a serious attempt to give adequate explanation to an indisputable fact." [22]

Accordingly, he first disposes of the ethical solution of the Christological problem. While the emphasis laid upon the moral perfection of Christ sets forth "eternal life as the final thing in the Gospel message, and the supreme thing in the religious spirit," the excommunication of philosophy strikes him as a "sign of intellectual uncertainty and immaturity." [23] There must be an adequate personal and living centre in Christ, which this view seems to ignore. Feeling cannot be substituted for reason. Both the Ritschlian theology and the Harnackian history are rejected on these grounds as an inadequate solution of the problem.

He then passes to the relation of Christ to man. Our time has been rich in presenting Jesus as our supreme example. Hence Jesus is imitable, and "the morality of God in Christ is the morality for mankind." [24] Hence we step at once to the "representative value of Christ Godward. He is the representative son of God; through him we behold our affinity to the Eternal Father, our consubstantiation with Deity." [25] Out of His consciousness of sonship to the Eternal came His perfect union with Him in morality; and if this morality "is to be made available for the world, the consciousness of sonship to God in which Christ lived, and out of which His absolute moral example came, must be made universal." [26] Gordon goes even so far as to say, "First, [Christ] is consubstantiated with humanity; and, second, by means of the revelation in Him, humanity is seen to be consubstantiated with God."

One cannot regard this word "consubstantiated" as very happily chosen. If it be employed in deference to the past, and be derived from Lutheran theology, it may mean that in Christ humanity was penetrated with divinity as in the heated iron bar the iron is penetrated with heat, which exists in and with

the iron, and that through the agency of Christ divinity thus comes to dwell in humanity. It were simpler and better to speak of the "indwelling" of the divine in Christ and in men.

But what exactly is this "sonship" which Christ has with God? What is the ultimate nature of this divine "consubstantiated" with humanity? Gordon's answer is, It is the Creator. "We live in the universe that He has made; our judgments of truth and of goodness are but the images of His mind and heart; our whole thought of the Infinite mystery in whose presence we stand has been formed under His influence." [27] Going back to the old Greek philosophy, Gordon discusses the dictum, "Man is the measure of all things," through Plato's modification of it, that not every man, nor in the fullest sense any imperfect man, but "God" is this measure; passing thence to Aristotle's, that it is the perfect man, and thus arrives at the position that Christ is this criterion of the true understanding of all things. "It is in reality the reason and heart of Christ that we believe to lie behind all things, that we trust as the core of the universe. This is a stupendous step to take, but it is a step that all believers in the Christian God have taken." [28] Science and history join in the same conclusion when it is seen that "in nature and in humanity the tremendous individualism, the devouring passion, has from the first been under the control of an opposing principle, the force of self-sacrifice." [29] Thus, he says, in the passage already quoted, "so far as we have a God, Christ is in very truth our God." Nothing could seem more absolute than this; but lest he go too far, Gordon later adds, "These reflections do not prove that [Christ] is at the heart of the universe, but they do prove that He is at the heart of our human universe; they do not demonstrate the reality of His absolute ascendency, but they do demonstrate His ascendency over mankind." [30]

Our author now pauses to ground still more solidly the proposition as to the divinity of Christ which he has already laid down. He does this by an application to this subject of the law that

"plurality must embody the two principles of identity and difference. . . . Through all the ranks of life there must run a sublime identity. . . . [But] the strand of difference runs throughout creation. As without the identity there can be no unity, so without the difference there can be no variety and no reality in finite existences. . . . The highest expression in humanity of the law of difference is the Person of Jesus Christ.[31] [While, therefore, Jesus was identical with us as a man, He must also be different from us, or must] sustain to God a relation [that we do not, viz., one] singular, inapproachable, ineffable. . . . It should be clearly understood that the denial of the *possible* supreme divinity of Jesus means the absolute destruction of all individuality. . . . For it proceeds upon the supposition that the attributes that men have in common are the sole, exclusive reality, and that the attributes in which they differ are not attributes at all, but the mere accidents of existence. . . . If the individuality of Jesus is of no account, if His separateness from sinners means nothing, if His genius carries one nowhere, if He is real and significant only so far as He participates in a common nature, then indeed it follows that His supreme divinity is a myth; but it turns out also that human personality is a myth, that all claim to reality on the part of the thinking, feeling, and active soul is insane raving. . . . If we are not ready to aid and abet this universal suicide on the part of mankind, . . . *we may at least affirm that the unique divinity of Jesus is possible.*"[32]

It would seem impossible to read this argument without astonishment. If there must be a "difference" in Jesus, does it follow that among all the myriad possible differences which we may imagine, the difference actually existing should be unique divinity? I, too, humble as I may be, must truly differ from my neighbour, but, however good I may be, does it follow that I am divine? But does *not* it follow upon the basis of this argument? And how lame the conclusion, that this divinity, to the defence of which such artillery is brought up, is *"possible."* Is not *this* argument "little more than 'sound and fury' "?[33]

Taken as a whole, Gordon's Christology seems to be exposed to two serious criticisms. *First* it rests upon the lingering remnants in his mind of the old doctrine of the authority of the Scriptures. This Christology is that of St. Paul as developed

by the Fourth Gospel. The foundation is supplied by the former, and is thoroughly fallacious, resting upon a misinterpretation of his vision upon the road to Damascus, and upon a false conception of the divine origin of the system of Old Testament sacrifices which he sees brought to their consummation in the sacrifice of Christ, which derives its value from the divine dignity of the victim. The Fourth Gospel is a late production, most probably of the middle of the second century, which presents an ideal picture of the being and work of Christ in entire independence of the objective record of the actual Jesus found in the Synoptics and in substantial contradiction of that record. The total basis of Dr. Gordon's argument is thus removed. But, *second,* he does not adhere with any fullness or accuracy to his half-conscious authorities. He falls far short of both Paul and Paul's disciple. With them the divinity of Christ is no "possibility," but a certainty. Their "incarnation" was nothing in which the race of man as a whole, or any man as an individual, could have a true participation. We find nothing in them about an "incarnation in humanity." [34]

This lack of conformity to the authorities upon which he is really, however unconsciously, leaning is further seen in the treatment which Dr. Gordon gives to the doctrine of the Trinity to which he next turns. He takes here substantially the same attitude as towards the divinity of Christ. "One may feel the *entire credibility* of the Trinity, *if historically revealed.*" This historical revelation is, however, not necessarily restricted to the Scriptures; for he goes on to say:

> "The consciousness of God carries in it a radical and an eternal contrast to that of man. *It has millions and millions of modes, which are yet more than modes, which are persons.* They are part of it and yet are distinct from it. Why should there not be three Eternal Distinctions behind all these multitudinous temporal distinctions? In the nature of the case, what reason is there against the reality of an eternal threefold form in the Godhead,—the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Life and the Light and the Love that have been one from everlasting?" [35]

There follows in the discussion a long argument in support of the idea of the Trinity.[36] The law of difference is again brought in, the personality of God found to contain three elements, "self-consciousness, mental and moral unity, and self-determination," and the argument for the Trinity carried on thus:

"The supreme divinity of Jesus Christ is but the sovereign expression in human history of the great law of difference in identity that runs through the entire universe, and that has its home in the heart of the Godhead. With this law in our thought, we dare to look into the New Testament conception of God as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. In him we find eternally existing the Paternal, the Filial, and the union of these two. Here are the differences in the ineffable community of the Godhead. Is it not conceivable that the Filial in God should have been in union with Jesus in a way unparalleled and inapproachable? Surely it is thinkable and credible that, in consequence of His mission and relation to the world, the Deity might have been the basis of Christ's being in a manner utterly singular, and that, along with the kinship between Him and us, there might be an eternal contrast. The universe is the work of God. It is not for us to say what shall be the character of creation; we must take reality as we find it, and reverently seek for insight into its mystic depths. The claim, that in Jesus there is a union with God absolutely unique, is at least conceivably sound and true. The claim cannot be disposed of without consideration. It cannot be dismissed prior to examination of the fact. Jesus Christ is a fact too transcendent to be accommodated to the requirements of a given philosophy. The scheme that is to prevail, that is not doomed to a disastrous collision with reality, must grow out of the historic truth. The man who comes forward with a programme in his hand, according to which the universe must be ordered, is too ambitious. His task is too great for him. He is usurping the place of creative wisdom. The universe is already here, ordered in terms of the Eternal Reason; and history is already here, and its evolution of the character of the Ultimate Life, and man's duty is to follow the path of the great revelation. The assertion that Christ cannot be very God of very God, in a sense infinitely beyond what may be truthfully said of all other human beings, is sheer intellectual pre-

sumption, is, indeed, dogmatism of the worst kind. Our great faith in the unique divinity of Jesus is then *possibly true.*" [37]

The length of this quotation is justified by its character as an eloquent summary of the whole argument hitherto. We must be briefer hereafter. Gordon proceeds to a positive argument. This may be summarized as reasoning from (1) the necessity for *society* in the Godhead, from which follows that there is an Eternal Prototype of humanity in God; (2) the fact that Jesus is the supreme representative of the Filial in God. There is in Him "a recognizable, a demonstrable transcendence of the actual human category." [38] (3) From Christ's perfect humanity. Environment can never account for this. The *range* of His transcendence denotes His complete uniqueness. (4) That He is the moral ideal of the world "is the chief sign of His differentiation from the human race."

Acknowledging, now, that Dr. Gordon is right in the central place he has given to the person of Christ as the problem of the liberal theology, the question arises how far he has given us a solution of this problem. Prophet as he is, he must nevertheless submit to the logical test. In application of this, we note (1) that his doctrine is not the historical Nicene doctrine. Dr. Gordon would be the last to declare this or desire it. Again (2) there is no effort at clear formulation of his doctrine. The technical words brought down from the historical formulations only confuse his reader. For example, the word *persons* employed in the passage quoted from page 106, "Millions and millions of persons" in God! That means either nothing at all, or an incredibly loose polytheism. So, again, the use of the word *consubstantiation* and its derivatives, which has already received a too liberal interpretation in this context, deprives them utterly of their original meaning. The *homoousion* of the Nicene creed is translated in an early Latin rendering by the word *consubstantialem*. From that proposition has been derived the doctrine that Christ inherently possessed all the divine attributes, omniscience, omnipotence, etc. But shall we say that by the "consubstantiation of humanity with divin-

ity," [89] humanity becomes omnipotent? Nor (3) is any effort made to clear away the objections which have been raised to both Trinity and Christology, that the one destroys monotheism, and the other rends the unity of the person of Christ. Any one who presents a doctrine of the Trinity in these days which is supposed in any degree to be appropriate to present conditions, ought certainly to clear it from these old encumbrances. Still again (4), if it is conceded that Christ transcends humanity, does it at all follow that He is divine? The Arian hypothesis presents certainly a possibility that ought to have been considered. (5) Nothing in the nature of positive proof is anywhere presented for the doctrine. The law of difference in identity is too vague and open to too many other possibilities, the transcendence of Jesus equally vague. (6) Over against the transcendence of Jesus exists a fact in the story of Jesus which demands explanation from any trinitarian, viz., the dependence of Jesus upon the Holy Spirit, which has entirely the appearance of a human dependence. His prayers were very human prayers, as in Gethsemane. According to the Fourth Gospel, He had the Spirit "not by measure"; and according to *Hebrews,* He made His sacrifice "through the eternal Spirit." (7) After all, these two doctrines are an impertinence. They attempt to sound the depths of the infinite and eternal nature of God. This is not a sphere for human discoveries. We may know much of God, His personality, His unity, our own likeness to Him; but of the total meaning and range of that personality, and of the interior constitution of the divine nature, *nothing* except by revelation from the very mouth of God—and no such revelation has been given. The fact that such disclosures are attempted by the New Testament writers, does not help the matter. It was an impertinence in them, as it is in us. (8) Dr. Gordon's true problem was to sound the depths of a sinless nature, if he could do so, and discover what was involved in such a basal fact as sinlessness. Granted that a child had from birth the Spirit "without measure," what would that mean for his religious consciousness? It would certainly mean intimate fellowship with God, undisturbed by alien elements, sel-

fishness, self-indulgence, ambitions, appetites, the degeneration of indulged wrong-doing. To what degree of sympathy with God and of insight into His will might such a soul not come? What would be the effect upon the intellect, whether in the way of directing its activities, or of enlarging and developing them? What would be the effect upon the conscience, upon the ethical sense, upon the concrete conceptions of right and wrong, and upon the perception of the essence of all virtue? What upon his sense of personal responsibility and his convictions as to his personal mission in the world, and his message to men? And how far would these things constitute his transcendence to ordinary humanity? Here is a field of reflection still untrodden, here a place where men are still waiting for a man of such training and such insight as Dr. Gordon undeniably had. But (9) when all these deductions have been made, Dr. Gordon did an immense service to the steadying and self-finding liberalism of the opening century when he emphasized as he did the *prophethood* of Jesus. It was the peril then threatening the movement that it should lose its Christ, go so far in its recoil from false theological theories and practices as to abandon the use of the Bible as a book found to have no such authority as had been attributed to it and had formed the rational basis of its previous devotional use, and in ceasing the payment of divine honours to Christ cease even to look to him for any leadership and to throw itself wholly upon the instructed intellect. Gordon's insistence upon Christ's "transcendence" recalled even the most radical rationalist to the realization of his Leadership, unmistakeable through the centuries and unmistakeable now, and to the most materially minded lifted Him to a position that must be acknowledged, that of an *expert* in religion. The presence of Christ with us to-day, though it must now be conceived as an *ideal* [40] presence, was rendered effective by the extraordinary certainty and enthusiasm of Gordon's belief in it, and men who were ready to abandon it felt that they could not lose so valuable an asset of the spiritual life. It gave a basis for Paul's great enthusiasm for Christ, even for those who abandoned his impossible theology and Christology.

Even if it cannot be said, with Gordon, that "his thought after two thousand years needs no revision," [41] he remains indisputably *the Master* in religion,[42] as no philosopher does in philosophy, no Plato, no Hegel, no Caird. For whatever share in this feeling the developing liberalism of this day may have, it is principally indebted to the insight and eloquence of George A. Gordon.

To return, now, to the "Ultimate Conceptions" from our prolonged digression; Next, the universal ultimate, the moral universe, is powerfully presented as the goal of the whole onward sweep of human history. The author assumes, apparently, the existence of life on other worlds than ours, for his universe could scarcely be a universe, if the subjects of its salvation and actors in its moral history were limited to the inhabitants of the insignificant globe upon which men now live. But he does not enter specifically on this discussion. It is undoubtedly implied in the idea of immortality interpreted as the period of our final and large co-operation with God in the establishment of a universal kingdom of righteousness; but the argument would gain in appropriateness to the present vagueness of thought in this direction and in power, if this point were subjected to an adequate consideration.

It was certainly a great thing for a young man to place among the "ultimates" of his theological thinking the world of man and the moral universe. He came thus into sympathy with those other members of the liberal movement who, like Gladden, were to lay emphasis upon the social activities of the Church. But his own line of effort lay in another direction, and his great service was in the promotion of spiritual religion, in the development of the inner man. His last ultimate is the Absolute, God. He approaches this topic as others from the point of view of man considered as "the measure of all things," the key to the final meaning of the universe. The idea of God is, then, for the intellect, the meaning of the universe; for reason, the highest necessity; for the æsthetic sense, the significant beauty of the universe; for conscience, the final moral meaning; for the will, the doer of righteousness; for man, the

person to whom men look for inspiration, as leader, and as perfect goal.[43]

Every idea, he goes on to say, may be regarded either as a revelation or a discovery. The Christian idea of God is both. As a discovery, it is man's "supreme achievement." [44] It is also his "supreme comfort," for "without God humanity must break down; it cannot in a godless universe support the burden of its own heart." [45] Belief in God comes to Christians as "heirs of the highest wisdom of the race,—as a great bequest." They find themselves believers in a believing community before they ever come to a critical estimate of their belief.

"Theistic education is simply domestic education in its widest form. The idea of God is the enfolding atmosphere of thought and feeling; it modifies all early associations and interests; it stands over the growing life in an incessant unconscious ministry; it is the undiscerned fountain of the progressive idealization of existence, the centre from which all things are regarded and the light in which they are beheld. The consciousness of God thus goes with the normal youth as the day goes with him. He lives in it, society has its being in it, the universe moves in it. Thus close to the mind of youth in Christian society and inseparable from it, thus inevitable, universal, and gloriously real is the conception of God." [46]

But the day comes when the Christian begins to consider the truth of this conception. "The answer . . . is both close at hand and of infinite significance." The proof is not an enumeration of the arguments, ontological, cosmological, teleological, the traditional philosophy, which is "the court of the Gentiles . . . a respectable place and the crowd . . . great and impressive," but it is given in "the supreme sanctuary of the soul." The moral affirmation of God and the serious struggle to do His will brings a man "within sight of the real proof of God's being." Such a life "goes in the strength of the undeniable God. . . . The victorious moral will, marching in the light of the moral ideal, is the great witness for God. . . . Here is the real beginning of the theistic argument. Man must find God in himself if he would find God beyond himself." In God alone is

found the explanation both of the history of the individual man and of the history of the race.

"The ultimate position is that God is the necessity of humanity. If we did not need Him, we should not seek Him. . . . The God who does not answer to man's needs, can never satisfy man's reason. . . . It should always be borne in mind that the quest for God is essentially the search for the full account and final meaning of human life. Before they can suffice as the maker of man, wisdom and power must rise into love. For the genuine life of mankind is love; as it comes to itself, that life comes to love. The love of man seeks for the origin of itself in the love of God." [47]

By this discussion of God Gordon is brought again to the doctrine of the Trinity as he had been previously from Christological discussions. He waives aside the "barren treatment" which "shows an endless seesaw between three Gods and one God in three modes of manifestation." He seeks "the reality behind the symbol. . . . I do not care for a word or a symbol in itself considered; but I am convinced that underneath this word and symbol is a truth without which the life of faith cannot last." This truth is "the essentially social nature of God."

"A psychology of God, or a definition of the mode of the Divine being, I regard as impossible; but this does not, in my judgment, close the debate. It simply puts limitations upon it and gives it a new and more fruitful direction. We are thrown back upon the question, Which conception of God, the unitary or the social, is for mankind the freer from embarrassment and of the greater worth?" [48]

Following the suggestions which the nature of man gives us as to the nature of God, he is a God of *knowledge*.

But, if "knowledge is real in God, He must have an eternal object of thought. . . . When, therefore, following the human analogy, God is made an eternal object to Himself, he is thereby conceived as an essentially social being. . . . God is a real thinker, upon a real object, in a real way . . . He must be the personal thinker, the personal object, the personal truth between these two; He must be infinite reality covered by the most sacred of all symbols, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." [49]

A similar argument is urged as to *love*.

"An eternal altruistic God to whom from all eternity there is no other, in whom there is no other, is about as palpable an absurdity as can be put in words. . . . Love in God must mean the passion for another; its reality depends upon the society in the Godhead. [And, as to *humanity*] How can a social humanity come out of an unsocial deity? . . . How can an unsocial God know parenthood? He is not a father, he has no eternal son; are not a father's passion and a mother's love incomprehensible to him? . . . A God who is a father and a son and a holy spirit by courtesy only, is absolutely out of all relation to human life. Such a deity may have an ornamental use, but he can be in no way essential to man as man." [50]

One word more of criticism of Gordon's doctrine may be permitted with this reintroduction of the subject of the Trinity. It is this, that after all, there is little or no reason to believe that a thinker of the twentieth century, starting out independently, with all the substantial elements of the religious experience which Gordon demands, would find these paths of reasoning the ones necessary to follow. Nor was the Trinity the path necessary for antiquity. No one can follow the speculations of Sankara in India, or of Meister Eckhart in Germany, on pure being which exists "without parts, modifications, relations, or plurality; one, eternal, unchangeable, simple, the reality of all reality," without being impressed with the thought that trinitarian speculation is not a necessity of the human mind. Nor can such a modern philosopher as William James be read to any considerable extent, with his profound contempt for all ideas of the "Absolute" of much modern philosophy, without the same impression. In fact, all speculation on the ultimate and inner secret of the existence of God is futile, if it is not a huge impertinence. How can man's thinking embrace the necessary facts for such reasoning? The ancient question remains, even if in a slightly different sense, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" [51]

The theology with which the young Gordon entered upon his great ministry in Boston is now pretty clearly before us. With some greater clearness and fulness, no doubt, it is yet sub-

stantially what he has put before us in the "Ultimate Conceptions." These, with the necessary corollaries in ethics and in the practical cure of souls, were the great themes of his mighty discourse. He had brought from his study of the history of philosophy and from his reading in current discussions the view of nature and of human history which had become the assured possession of all thorough and competent thinkers. He accepted evolution as the law followed not only in the one but also in the other. The miraculous had disappeared from the realm of acknowledged fact. The Bible had lost its old position as an accepted authority, and become the precious repository of the great thoughts of great men born out of a great experience of God. He had learned that God is for and not against man always and forever. With this in mind, the whole edifice of a minute predestination and of an eternal hell with its punishments inflicted not to reform men but to "satisfy the divine justice," had disappeared, swept away by the aroused moral indignation of an outraged heart. No doctrine of atonement appears in his pages. He became a preacher of the doctrine of God and of Christ; and, bringing man into living connection with these, he cared little what they should think upon minor themes. His whole ministry was lifted immensely and made from the beginning an example for the imitation of high-minded men. He stood forth among his contemporaries like a new Augustine.

A much briefer review of the remaining books of Dr. Gordon's will bring us to the end of this study. His earliest book was *The Witness to Immortality* (1893), in which he summarized the teaching of the thinkers of all the ages of the Western World. It is a work of great learning and filled with suggestive passages. The theme recurs again and again in his later writings. In its most compendious form, the first "Ingersoll Lecture" at Harvard (1897), it grounds the argument upon the two principles of the goodness of God and the worth of man. Immortality stands or falls with the moral idea of the universe.

"To say that the Creator has a supreme moral interest in human beings, that He is full of compassion for them and offers to help them into the way of righteousness during the brief and uncertain period of their existence upon this earth, but that after death His mood is one of unalterable mercilessness toward all the failures in time, and that the environment of the future is so constructed as to make the desire for ethical improvement—supposing it to exist, which is not at all unlikely—eternally ineffectual, is to destroy forever the moral idea of God. . . . The question is not what men deserve, but what God's honor demands." [52]

The argument against annihilation would be the same, and equally strong. The treatment throughout is rich; but it cannot be said to be distinctly new.

In the year 1901 Dr. Gordon published *The New Epoch for Faith*. "The purpose of the volume," he says, "is to discover and announce the chief significance for faith of the nineteenth century. It is believed that the great witness of that century is the witness to man." [53] He considers the forces that have delayed the coming of the kingdom of man, the periods that have prepared for it, its advent in the great events of the past century. Hence has come a new appreciation of Christianity. The discipline of doubt has prepared the way for the "return to faith." [54] It is all in the author's best vein, but need detain us only at a single point, where he breaks his silence on the Atonement of Christ for a moment, to declare the "orthodox" doctrine a "fabrication of incompetent intelligence" and a "caricature upon Christianity," [55] and to say that in the Cross men "have been able to see behind a suffering Master a suffering God. They have become convinced that the suffering love that educates the world in whatever righteousness it has is an expression of the suffering love of the Most High." [56]

Of the remaining volumes which appeared from Dr. Gordon's pen previous to the year 1920 only one furthered in any special degree the development of a liberal theology and therefore laid claim for attention in this study, and this was that entitled *Religion and Miracle* (1909). There seems to have been some tension in the theological situation at that moment

in reference to this topic. The present writer felt this, and had published in 1908 an article in *The American Journal of Theology* on the New Testament miracles in which he had investigated the basis in fact of the standard argument of the apologists, that miracles are necessary to a revelation. They had long been declared to have an attesting power by which it might be known that the teaching which they accompanied came from the one worker of miracles, that is, God. He asked the question whether the New Testament miracles, as a cold matter of fact, did, according to the New Testament itself, actually serve any such attesting purpose; and the answer he gave was, No! The reason which had been brought forward for the introduction of miracles into the religious history of man having thus been shown invalid, the examination was pushed still further with the result that the writer very clearly took his place among those who deny not the metaphyiscal possibility, but the actuality, of the miraculous element in the evangelical story. Whether this particular article had anything to do with Dr. Gordon's choice of his theme or not, the writer does not know. Probably it did not. But the general tension of the times Dr. Gordon undoubtedly did feel, for to many the surrender of the Gospel miracles, and particularly of the reality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus, seemed to be the surrender of the supernatural element in Christianity, and the loss of its entire authority and convincing power. Liberals have not yet shaken themselves free from this impression, and they are still going back to Augustine for an argument, and saying that miracles are not violations of natural laws but only the introduction of the action of laws of which we are as yet ignorant!

The purpose of this work of Gordon's was an apologetic one. The author wished to quiet the disturbance of mind in which many were, by removing the cause of that disturbance, and in this way to set them free for the calm and unprejudiced study of all involved questions. He had no wish to make out a case against miracles,[57] nor to take any position at all in the premises so far as to employ that position as an element in his argument. His great thesis was that Christianity was independent of mir-

acle. Whether the Gospel miracles were actual or not did not affect religion. "My plea," he says, "is not against miracle, but against the identification of the fortune of religion with the fortune of miracle. My contention is in behalf of the Christian religion in its essence." [58] Still he did not attempt to conceal his own opinions. To him "miracles are logical possibilities and natural improbabilities." [59] He sometimes speaks rather slightingly of the idea of miracle. In the development of the character of Jesus, "to speak . . . of miracle, wonder, portent, is a kind of blasphemy." [60] Speaking of the prayer in Gethsemane he says: "How far away from the poor show of miracle it is. . . . Let no miracle profane its sanctity, let no thought of miracle degrade or diminish its hallowed and infinite import." [61]

But such opinions, pro or con, are not Gordon's immediate interest here. His theme is the independence of miracle in which the Gospel moves on its way. The following quotations will be enough, perhaps, to indicate the line of his argument, but they cannot do justice to the extraordinary eloquence of this volume:

"We can imagine a career like this full of portent and wonder from beginning to end, and yet absolutely destitute of those supreme qualities that have given to Jesus the moral leadership of the world. . . . If this is possible, something follows of great consequence. If we might possess the miracles of our Lord without possessing the Lord Himself, does it not follow that we might lose the miracles of our Lord and still retain Him? If all the miracles were gone, the vision of Jesus would remain. There is no mention of miracle in the Lord's Prayer, none in the great discourse in which that prayer stands, none in the wonderful parabolic teaching of our Master, none in the wisdom with which He filled the world. There are three things of immortal value in the teaching of Jesus. . . . His vision of God as infinite compassionate love, the Maker and Father of men . . . of man as the child of the Eternal, fitted in this temporal existence to reproduce in his human relations the dear and just love of God . . . of Himself as the person in whom these two visions are verified. . . . These three visions are absolutely independent of

miracle, they are the direct insight of His mind into the heart of things.[62]

In respect to the bodily resurrection of Jesus:

"If we deny the bodily appearance of Jesus after death, is not the faith of the apostles an illusion? This leads to another question. What is the proof of existence? Is it not influence over our lives? Why do we believe in the existence of the external world? We do not see it, we do not hear it. . . . Is it anything? If it is real, how do we know it? Because . . . in it we live and move and have our physical being. Our minds are kept in constant motion by its appeal. . . . Why do we believe in the existence of a friend? We have not seen his mind. . . . We believe in him because of his power over us. He has molded our intelligence; he has purified and enriched our heart. . . . Real being is power. . . . Can we frame a better test of real existence than that? Why do we believe in God? . . . God is not known to sense; He is not known by sense; He is known to the soul that is renewed out of His eternal grace. . . . Which is the greater witness to Peter that his Lord is alive and at the right hand of God, the fact that on several mysterious occasions he saw Jesus after His passion with the eye of flesh, or the fact that Jesus has given him out of the unseen a new mind, . . . a new character, a life in which the grace of the Lord is the prevailing power?" [63]

The argument in reference to the vision of Paul on the way to Damascus is the same. Did he have an objective appearance of Jesus, or was the vision inner and subjective? It is immaterial which; for

"This is the outline of Paul's reason for his faith in the risen Lord. The Lord Jesus had changed him from a persecutor to a preacher of the Gospel; He had changed the entire organism of His thinking; He had changed his experience from despair to triumph as a servant of the moral ideal; He had sent him over an empire as a prophet of the Eternal love; He had enabled him to endure nameless sufferings and glory in them that he might thereby show forth the power of his Master. Paul's life came out of his faith in the risen Lord. With such a life as issue, could he reasonably doubt the divine reality of the cause? Not till something can come from nothing, not till wholesome living can come from delusions, not till it can be shown that all

that is deepest and divinest in the life of man comes from lies, shall we dare to say that Paul's faith in the reality of his vision of the risen Lord is vain." [64]

The service of this book, as the proof that one great and noble mind, which for itself entirely rejected the miracle, was undisturbed in its acceptance of Christianity and confidence in its great doctrines, was very great. And great also was the strength with which it drew the distinction between truth and any merely external authority for it. Its final authority, and that a complete authority, is from within. The truth shines by its own light. This principle cannot be emphasized too much.

Undoubtedly the purpose of the book, to afford calmness to the mind and so to enable it to pursue investigations undisturbed by the great fear of losing everything in the process, was reached in many cases. This was, so far forth, a valuable service. But the line of argument followed may have had the further and unfortunate result, in many cases, of rendering it easy for men to avoid coming to any definite conclusion on the subject whatever. From some quarter, if not from this book, such an influence seems to have proceeded, with the consequence that many ministers are still preaching to cultivated congregations which do not believe in miracles, and rendering it very hard for their best hearers and the greatest minds among them to hold on to the Gospel at all, and even to believe in the competency or else in the honesty of the preacher. The effect upon the mental fibre of the thinker is equally disastrous. Liberalism ought to go far enough to *liberate*. A more serious consequence of the style of argument adopted in the book is that it ignores the real difficulties of the subject. If the Gospels were written by men of so little historical sense as to incorporate in their narratives stories which had no foundation in fact, what are we to think as to the credibility of the remaining portions of their so-called histories? And when we add the differences found in the Fourth Gospel, can we believe that we have any credible account of the teaching and personality of Jesus whatever? Has not the *historical* character of Christian-

ity evaporated? And in reference to Paul especially, if his vision was a delusion and he had no objective sight of the real Christ, and if his consequent certainty of the Resurrection and of the present reign of Christ from His heavenly throne was all an unfounded inference from an unreal premise, what shall we say of the characteristic features of his teaching? They will not be rescued from our condemnation by the argument which Dr. Gordon presents—that "the Lord Jesus had changed him from a persecutor to a preacher of the Gospel; had changed the entire organism of his thinking; had changed his experience from despair to triumph as a servant of the moral ideal; had sent him over an empire as a prophet of the Eternal love," etc., as already quoted—for that argument is entirely fallacious. A man may have—nay, he *has*—sufficient reason for attributing to God the inner experiences which he perceives to have their origin in influences from without himself, which are divine in their character; but what reason has he for attributing them to a distinct personality, such as Christ? [65] They are divine, because they finally mean the reign of perfect love, and this is the kingdom of God. But by what distinct *channel* these influences are brought to bear upon him, whether through the immediate action upon him of the infinite God, or through the communication of divine messengers, such as angels, or by Christ Himself, he has no ground for determining. Of one thing only he may be sure, that his thanks and his worship are due to God, and that as divine influences they justify this worship by proving the existence of God.

The liberal movement, therefore, still waits for an adequate treatment of the subject of miracles.

The verdict of history on the services of Dr. Gordon will be, I believe, what he has himself expressed in these words:—"I conceive myself to be a genuine conservative; I am conscious that I work for the preservation of essential historic Christianity; I consider myself to be, to the extent of my power, a defender of the eternal Gospel." [66] He has stood, a very great figure, in full accord with the spirit of the times and in full acceptance of most of its secure acquirements. But he has faced the past. He should have turned his face to the future.

The past will take care of itself if in the present the building is carried on in such a way as to secure the future. Had he thus directed his gaze as to what was to come, and meditated upon what the present time must do in preparation for it, he might have been that one commanding, universally accepted, and determinative Leader, of whom struggling and confused Liberalism stood so greatly in need at the beginning of the twentieth century, and of whom it still stands in need.

REFERENCES

1. To a certain extent he unconsciously describes himself in the following passage *(Religion and Miracle,* p. 176): "As in some great mountain one notes a unique relation to the infinite sky and a capacity out of that sky to renew its splendor, so in a soul sublime in its religious consciousness, we observe a sovereign sense of the Eternal, and an unmeasured capacity to recreate life on a nobler plan and on a vaster scale from the Eternal."

2. George A. Gordon, *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith,* p. 86 f.

3. *Ibid.,* p. 94.

4. The Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale for 1902, published in 1903.

5. *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith,* p. 21.

6. *Ibid.,* p. 78.

7. *Ibid.,* p. 272 ff.

8. "The holy Scriptures . . . are simply the supreme literature of the religious life, and their authority, as in the teachings of Christ, is the authority of the highest of their kind." "The New Puritanism," p. 150 (sermon in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn).

9. *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith,* p. 131 ff.

10. *Ibid.,* p. 143.

11. *Ibid.,* p. 180 f.

12. *Ibid.,* p. 182.

13. *Ibid.,* p. 294 f. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]

14. He acknowledges his indebtedness to Fairbairn's *Place of Christ in Modern Theology* as the source of "great impulse" in this study.

15. George A. Gordon, *The Christ of To-Day,* p. 28 f.

16. George A. Gordon, *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery,* p. 167 ff.

17. *The Christ of To-Day,* p. 30 f.

18. *Ibid.,* p. 50 f.

19. *Ibid.,* p. 115.

20. *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith,* p. 279.

21. *The Christ of To-Day,* p. 91.

22. *Ibid.,* p. 53.

23. *Ibid.,* p. 56 f.

24. *Ibid.,* p. 69.

25. *Ibid.,* p. 77.

26. *Ibid.,* p. 79.

27. *Ibid.,* p. 81.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 94 ff.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 96 ff. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
33. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
34. There are many expressions of this general value in Gordon. Compare *The New Epoch for Faith*, p. 134, "The incarnation, of which all men are the subjects," with the context.
35. *The Christ of To-Day*, p. 106. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
36. The "complete identity of the divine and the human" (Whiton) is styled a "sweeping and perilous generalization" (p. 104).
37. *Ibid.*, p. 112 ff. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
38. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
40. "Reason has no place for him in the purely human categories, unless these are made the forms for an ideal humanity." But Gordon's idea is not that the presence of Christ with us now is merely ideal. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
42. "The best single characterization of Jesus would be the teacher." *Ibid.*, p. 61.
43. *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, p. 333 ff.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 342.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 345.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 346 ff.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 363 ff.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 368 f.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 370 ff.
51. I depend for my view of Sankara and Eckhart on the study of Eastern and Western Mysticism given in the Haskell Lectures at Oberlin, by Prof. Rudolph Otto, of Marburg University, in 1924.
52. George A. Gordon, *Immortality and The New Theodicy*, p. 77 f.
53. George A. Gordon, *The New Epoch for Faith*, p. vii.
54. *Ibid.*, p. vii f.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
57. George A. Gordon, *Religion and Miracle*, p. x.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 93 f.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 84 ff.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 108 ff.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
65. The writer employed the same argument in his book *Christian Life and Theology* (1900), pp. 139-141. He retracts that argument, as he must most of the theological positions taken in that book.
66. *Religion and Miracle*, p. x.

VII

INFLUENCES FROM ABROAD

UP TO this point in our history, the liberal movement seems to have been indigenous, originated and carried on by the native forces of our own religious life. Influence from abroad does not seem to play a large part. This impression needs, however, some degree of correction. As was pointed out in a former volume [1] there is a well-nigh perfect correspondence between the periods of theological development in Europe and America. But relatively the liberal movement is but little influenced from foreign quarters in its early stages. To a degree this will be found to be so to the end. But already we have seen the theory of evolution, an English proposal, begin to exercise its revolutionary influence. Soon we shall see quite clearly and confessedly the employment of foreign authorities and the pursuit of foreign lines of thought. Theological students have already begun to resort to Germany, among whom may be mentioned C. M. Mead, S. I. Curtiss, Archibald Duff, Ozora S. Davis, Williston Walker, B. P. Bowne, Albion Small, J. F. Genung, F. H. Foster, all of them Ph.D.'s; and, no less important, H. P. Smith, G. P. Fisher, the Smyth brothers, Egbert and Newman, H. C. King, H. M. Scott, etc. In all of these writers German influence is to be traced more or less clearly. It is, therefore, necessary that we should pause in the direct development of our subject to consider this foreign influence briefly, for it cannot be at length.

English writers, of course, play the largest part in this regard, although their influence is not always acknowledged or even conscious. They, too, are greatly influenced by Germany, from which people have originated in every department of modern thought the greatest and most decisive contributions to human progress that have been made. In this history, the English

writer most frequently referred to is A. M. Fairbairn, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, whose *Place of Christ in Modern Theology* exercised very great influence. He also studied in Germany. This work, to which reference has already been made, opens with a chapter on "the return to Christ," in the light of which the doctrinal history of the Church is reviewed. In the constructive part of the work, the old positions as to the Trinity and the nature of Christ are retained. The revelation of God in Christ as Father gives the dominating idea of theology. Christ is the true creative personality for doctrine as well as the Church. This has not been rightly understood in Christian history, and even Westminster is dominated by the idea of the sovereignty of God and not by the idea of God given to us in Christ. Fairbairn comprises the character of God in the two terms *love* and *righteousness*. But he teaches their unity. He says: "To love is to be righteous; to be unrighteous is to be incapable of love." It might, therefore, be expected that Fairbairn would adopt a theory of the Atonement which would make it consistent with this idea. He does this; for though he criticizes the "governmental" theory, he teaches it substantially. He says: "The Atonement has satisfied both the love and the righteousness of God,—His love by being a way for the recovery and salvation of man; His righteousness by vanquishing sin within the sinner, and vindicating the authority of the eternal will."

The conception of God as Father, if used as the determinative principle of theology, demands a modification of the older eschatology. Fairbairn's treatment of this theme is somewhat noncommittal on the question of everlasting punishment. God's fatherly punishments are in their nature chastisements, not the displays of vindicatory justice. God is ever seeking to reform the sinner when He chastises him. He will not annihilate the sinner, for annihilation, "either now, or at any moment inconceivably distant, were a confession by the Creator of utter helplessness, an acknowledgment that the universe, or a part of the universe, had so broken down in His hands that He knew no way of mending but by ending it." He does not teach final

restoration; for, since freedom remains so long as man is man, "the argument as little involves universal restoration as it allows partial annihilation. What it maintains is an eternal will of good, and, as a consequence, eternal possibilities of salvation. God will never be reluctant, though man may forever refuse."

Fairbairn affected different people differently. Some were greatly profited by the encyclopædic review of the entire doctrinal history of the Church, a department of study in which our theological seminaries were weak. To others it was a kind of confirmation of the chief point of orthodoxy in an evil time of much questioning. Others found in it a great number of stimulating suggestions. To still others,—and these were the more thoughtful—it presented a new view of the principle upon which a new theology could be organized. President King styled it an "epoch-making" book. It certainly furthered the new movement, but its influence in a constructive way was soon superseded by that which was more thorough and better.

German theological writers began to influence American development in any considerable degree directly only in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The first impression that they made upon us in our earlier acquaintance with them, was that of wildness in speculation and of theological irresponsibility. They were to be "answered." There might be a Theodore Parker who was carried away by them, but not good, sensible, and well-trained evangelical theologians. It would be difficult to trace the specific influence of individual German writers in the period we are now considering, though we may take it for granted that there was such influence in some degree. Of some of them, such as Schleiermacher, who is often referred to, generally with more or less misunderstanding, some positive influence can be asserted; and of one in particular, Albrecht Ritschl, it may be affirmed that his influence has been very great and has extended to many who had no first-hand acquaintance with his writings. We must therefore prefix to our studies of the period after the year 1880 a brief account of Ritschl's theology.

Ritschl [2] was born in Berlin, the son of an active and orthodox Lutheran pastor. He began his theological studies at Bonn with Nitzsch, who was orthodox. But difficulties occurring in consequence of his studies, he transferred himself to Halle, where, under the influence of Baur, he left the moderate theology of that university for an Hegelianism, which he afterwards abandoned. It was too abstract and "metaphysical" and corresponded too little with his Christian experience. He passed over to a more concrete way of treating philosophical questions, and abandoned with disgust "metaphysics," by which he meant Hegelianism and its like, and ruled out of his theology everything which had no "interest" for Christians, that is everything ontological. And he found in Hermann Lotze, when he was called to Göttingen in 1864, a philosopher who gave him what philosophical basis he needed for his theology. Lotze based his philosophy on ethics, which agreed well with Ritschl's emphasis on the Christian life.

Ritschl is therefore to be ranked as a theologian of Christian experience. He belongs to the Schleiermacherian tendency, as do the far more orthodox Thomasius and Frank of Erlangen. He abjured all "natural theology," and demanded of the prospective theologian that he should, first of all, "believe." How this faith is to be brought about, Ritschl does not make clear. His theology is intended for those who are already within the Church, within which alone there can be any theology. Christianity is a religion of revelation. Ritschl has no doctrine of inspiration nor does he discuss the reality of miracles. These things are "metaphysical," and he will have none of them. Enough that we have in the Bible, and particularly in the New Testament, the account of the progressive revelation of God, and Jesus' own, perfect revelation. We do not get our knowledge of God from nature or science.

God thus approached is our Father, and this is the central element in our thought of Him. The attempts to define His being made in the Church doctrine of the Trinity are not successful, and are also beside the mark as being ontological. Neither is the Church doctrine of the two natures in Christ to

be accepted. Christ reveals God to us as Father, and this idea governs Ritschl's theology. But Christ reveals God by what He *is*, and hence the attributes of God appear in Him, those attributes, that is to say, which have "interest" for us. He has therefore the *value* of God, that is, supplies everything which tends to promote the religious life, and which stirs the accompanying feeling. Now, since a thing, whatever it may be, is known to us only by its attributes, Christ, since He presents to us the attributes of God, *is* God.

Christ establishes upon earth the Kingdom of God, the perfect attainment of which is the object of the Christian Church. In this Church (*Gemeinde*) we know God, receiving the revelation made by Christ, and have our communion with God, receiving through it forgiveness and every other gift of God. The members of this community are members of it by virtue of their entire surrender to the will of God. God does not need to be reconciled to them by any agency, for He is already reconciled. That reconciliation rests upon the death of Christ, inasmuch as He, who was at that time the Kingdom of God in His own person, maintained the perfect surrender of the members of the Kingdom to God by submitting to the will of God which involved His death. He thus maintained the covenant of perfect obedience to God which is the basis of the community (*Gemeinde*), and thereby propitiated God. That death means that God will, at any price, *maintain His covenant* with man.

These particular features of Ritschl's comprise the main points in which his influence in America manifests itself. There was much more in his teaching which time forbids us to enter upon here. We shall not find any perfect Ritschlians among the men whose work will occupy us. In fact, there are no perfect Ritschlians in Germany now. But Ritschl's influence is to be traced in matters small and great in many a writer of the present epoch.

F. H. R. Frank of Erlangen exercised a considerable influence, but it was probably exerted in America through Professor Stearns of Bangor rather than directly by his own writings. Since Frank, in his *System der christlichen Gewissheit*, took

the new birth as his starting point, his matchless analysis and the magnificent sweep of his argument were lost on a generation which had largely replaced conversion by education. But, in different ways, Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Frank all contributed to the emphasis upon Christian experience as the source of theology which seems destined to increase with the passage of time. There are some traces, here and there, of the influence of the theory of the kenosis (Frank, *Entäusserung;* Thomasius, *Selbstbeschränkung*), which, however, cannot be said to have had any place in American liberalism. Here and there evidences of the influence of Herrmann, Beyschlag, Bernhard Weiss, Kaftan, and Thomasius crop out. Doubtless many a German has powerfully influenced some thinker who never heard his name mentioned. Influence is often exerted subterraneously!

Professor Stearns of Bangor Seminary, in his Ely Lectures at Union Seminary, developed the wealth of apologetic evidence there is in Christian experience for the defence of the fundamental doctrines of our religion. After treating the philosophical pre-suppositions of Christian experience, by which was meant the arguments for the existence of God, and the propositions upon the nature of man which distinguish Christianity from materialism, Stearns sketched with great power and fulness the genesis of the specifically Christian evidence to religion, by beginning at the fundamental fact of that experience, the new birth, and developing the growing knowledge which the Christian attains in that and subsequent Christian experience of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The importance of this part of his work consisted in the exhibition it made of the certainty of Christian truth to which the Christian comes by becoming a Christian. The verification of Christian truth was then treated, in which the main thought was that experience transforms into certainty the probable knowledge of truth which the Christian has on the testimony of the Bible or of any other source external to himself, by means of the contact with the spiritual entities which it gives.

The effect of this work upon its writer and the public was

immediate. Professor Stearns, before his early and lamented death, was contemplating the introduction of a larger degree of proof from Christian experience into the system of Christian theology, and doubtless, after a time, we should have had illustrations from his pen of the value of this effort. With the general theological public the book served to establish Christion experience in its right place by removing most of the misunderstandings which had been formed respecting it. It failed, however, to give a strictly scientific basis for the delineation of Christian experience. Professor Stearns laboured to present "a normal Christian experience, such as the Bible delineates, such as is narrated in innumerable books of Christian biography, and such as the ordinary believer recognizes as in the main his own." In this he was remarkably successful,—a fact which reflects great credit on his own balanced and symmetrical Christian character. And yet, systematic and objective method is lacking in his delineation. It remained for Principal Fairbairn to present, in his *Place of Christ in Modern Theology* a suggestion of the true method.

REFERENCES

1. F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology,* Introduction.

2. Otto Ritschl (his son), *Leben.*

VIII

WILLIAM N. CLARKE

THE general situation in matters theological as the nineteenth century was drawing to its close is now pretty well before us. It was still a time of yeasting, in which a number of positions had been arrived at in a loose and provisional way, but in which thinkers had not attained accurate and consistent, still less thorough-going, results. Nor had the whole field of theology been carefully surveyed, but men had studied this aspect of the great subject or that as practical necessity or personal interest had dictated.

It may be said that at this time liberalism had arrived in a general way at the following results:

1. The acceptance of evolution.
2. The application of the evolutionary method of study to historical investigation.
3. The acknowledgement of Biblical criticism in principle and in some of its results.
4. Various modifications of doctrine here and there; such as
    a. Endless future punishment generally rejected.
    b. Metaphysical theories of the Trinity and Christology very much shaken.
    c. The work of Christ perhaps generally conceived in substantial accord with Bushnell.
    d. A disposition to drop, for the most part, such topics as predestination, original sin, prevenient grace, etc., not merely from the creeds but from serious consideration.

A confused state of things! No comprehensive and truly great theologian had appeared to write a theology which should steady Christian thinking, conserve the results already gained, systematize the statements of truth and show its inner harmony, and open a clear path upon which theologians might ad-

vance with a reasonable hope of attaining a still wider and more exact view of the eternal truth. But just as the century was closing (1898) such a theologian did appear with an *Outline of Christian Theology* which was immediately received with the greatest satisfaction by the advancing liberalism, and attained a circulation and an influence which marked it as one of the great books of the time.

Singularly, it did not originate among that body which had hitherto borne the brunt of both the labour and the odium. But it was not without reason that it appeared where it did, among a congregationally organized body, the offspring of the same religious movement in the fifteenth century as the so-called "Congregationalists," and emphasizing individual freedom and initiative more strongly, if possible, than they,—the Baptists. The author was William Newton Clarke, Professor of Theology in Colgate University.

Professor Clarke's book did not begin with any review of the existing situation, nor did he pay any explicit attention to it in the development of his work. His seminary studies had impressed him as a youth with the prime importance of the Bible as the source of Christian knowledge, and his own studies in the Scriptures, carried on systematically throughout many years of pastoral service, joined with the effect upon his thinking of his religious experience as a man, had brought him to an independent and strictly personal interpretation of Christian doctrine. His years of teaching (since 1890) had matured his thought and brought it into a rounded completion, and he now wrote out of the fulness of his mind and heart, as most great books have been written. How naturally, and one may say how inevitably, it had grown up in his mind, a review of his career, could it be made in this place, would show with the greatest clearness. He was himself a contemporary of the whole liberal movement in the evangelical denominations (b. 1840, d. 1910). His theological training was under a teacher whom he described as "mystical," "a philosopher, thinking for himself and outreaching far and wide . . . in the excursions of a reverently exploring spirit." For such a teacher he was

hardly prepared, for the natural predilections of a Baptist, born in a communion which has always laid great emphasis on strict adherence to the literal meaning of Scripture, were for a Biblical theology, and these had been strengthened by the influence of the teacher of Biblical exegesis. His studies lay therefore in the department of exegesis rather than in either history or philosophy, though he was by no means ignorant of these or of modern contributions to them. But his own clear and candid mind, and the experiences of his own heart and the observations which he made in his several pastorates, wrought out a new theology which was distinctly his own. At Newton Centre, where he was settled from 1869 to 1880, he was intimately associated with the professors of the Newton Theological Institution, of whom the professor of theology, Dr. Alvah Hovey, was conservative, and Professor E. P. Gould was progressively liberal, indeed so much so that he was finally compelled to resign and entered the Episcopal Church, becoming professor at Philadelphia. Of this period Clarke himself says: "I was aware of this period largely as a period of harvest from my earlier life, but afterward I knew it to be more truly a seed-time. . . . For months I was held to my task by a power from which there was no escape—from which, indeed, I had no desire to escape. It was a great experience; for now, under an impulse that I knew to be from God, my best powers were for the first time grappling with the primal moral facts of existence. I had been handling divine realities all my years, but never until now had I been under such strong and joyful constraint in dealing with them. Such labour could not be in vain in the Lord, and to me it was richly fruitful." [1] But it was also a period of growing difficulty with his people. After a pastorate and a professorship of the New Testament in Canada, he returned to his spiritual and intellectual home in Hamilton, New York, and was made professor of Systematic Theology in his own seminary, in Colgate University, in 1890.

On opening this book one is immediately struck with the freshness of its thought and with the beauty of its English style. It carries one on from page to page, although he may

have had no purpose to read it at length. Like his Master, Dr. Clarke teaches as "one having authority, and not as the scribes." There is comparatively little formal proof, but the statement of the positions maintained is so clear that one is inclined in multitudes of passages to give his assent at once. The book seems to flow directly out of the author's experience of the truth. He does not argue the case in favour of the freedom of the will, for example, but assumes it as a self-evident fact. And here lies the power of the book and its contribution to the developing movement,—in the prominence given to Christian experience. The great Christian truths, towards which the liberal movement was tending and which were to receive its emphasis, perhaps to the unjustifiable ignoring of truths of less importance,—the personality and fatherly care of God, the reality of prayer, the grace of God in seeking His lost children, the graciousness of His reception of the repentant and returning child, the fellowship of the people of God, and the glowing hopes of eternity,—received so strong a support from experience, were made so manifestly the indisputable testimony of the whole life of the Christian, and became in this illumination doctrines which he knew to be true, and which he seemed to himself always to have known to be true, that the reader arises from the perusal of the book mightily refreshed in spirit and girded anew for the great conflict with evil within and without. And what was perhaps still more, where the discovery of the fallacies of old arguments and the adoption of new and revolutionary positions had, in some cases, "taken away the Lord," obscured the face of Christ, and rendered it difficult to listen to His recorded teachings with the docility of a disciple or to look to Him for guidance with the loyalty of a devoted follower, Dr. Clarke so exhibited Jesus' work both as teacher and witness and so impressed one with the loveliness of His person, that the perplexed and troubled thinker could find again comfort and help in the words thus "brought to his remembrance." In fact, it might be said that if Clarke had detached his experiential argument for truth from the elements of the system which liberalism had already substantially thrown overboard,

it would have been found to give a complete proof, and one to many readers a new proof, of the vital doctrines of religion. In rendering this service, Dr. Clarke did a work of great importance.

But there are other aspects of the work. With all its freshness, it is distinctly a conservative book. Its use of the Bible is essentially unhistorical. This is most grossly true in regard to the Fourth Gospel, of which he writes: "The three [gospels] sprang directly from companionship with Jesus; the fourth sprang from like companionship, but companionship transfigured by the light of what He is, viewed in adoring reflection." [2] No objective historian will admit its existence till 150 A.D. or shortly before; but Clarke, and most of his contemporaries, were too apologetic in the tone of their minds to acknowledge a fact apparently so damaging to our acquaintance with the historical Jesus. Conservative was also his treatment of the subject of the miracles. On the one hand he is clearly of the mind that the Gospel does not depend upon the miracles for its evidence, for its spiritual truths shine by their own light.[3] And yet he will not relinquish the miracles, for the "evolutionary method does not necessarily preclude acts of creation in the course of the general movement." [4] He even defends the cursing of the fig tree as "an acted parable." [5] But he is clear that miracles are not primarily intended to attest the mission of Christ, for they "are best understood when they are regarded first as deeds of kindness." They were expressions before they were evidences.[6]

We are accordingly led to expect a conservative treatment of such doctrines as the Trinity. Clarke treats of this under two heads, discriminating between them by special titles, the divine Trinity, which is God's threefold *self-manifestation,* and the divine Triunity, which is His triune mode of *existence.*[7] Characteristically, he does not refer to Sabellianism, but he does say that "this is . . . the only Trinity that was known to the early Church." [8] The "triunity" is therefore a doctrine of speculation, and has been developed essentially in the later thinking of the Church.[9] Its elements are, however, to be found in the

New Testament. Paul teaches the pre-existence of Christ [10] and the Fourth Gospel appears to be "framed on purpose to introduce this claim." [11] The post-apostolic church developed the doctrine of the Spirit, and "the doctrine of the Triunity . . . is not yet finished and complete." [12] Christ is the eternal Son, and this means that God is "in some manner forever reproducing Himself within Himself." [13] And hereupon follows a thoroughly Hegelian passage, though Hegel is not mentioned, in which the divine consciousness is said to involve the production of an object of thought, himself, within himself, and the recognition of this object as identical with himself. "The assertion 'I am I' means, 'The I that I think of is identical with the I that thinks.' " [14] Why Clarke, the theologian of the Bible and of experience, of all men, should have gone into this region of unsubstantial abstractions is a mystery, the only solution of which is probably his unconquerable conservatism. Fortunately for liberalism, this part of Clarke's work seems to have attracted little attention and no following.

The same characteristics appear in the treatment of Christology. The Four Gospels are placed on a level, and are made sources of the description of the life of Christ without an adumbration of the results of historical criticism. Hence the miraculous birth of Jesus is accepted without question, although Clarke mentions the Syriac version as preserving "the memory of a time when a tradition of His natural birth existed in the Church side by side with the belief that His birth was supernatural." [15] This ought to have opened his mind to the fact that evidences of the same naturalistic belief are found throughout the New Testament. The Resurrection is maintained, though "no one can claim thoroughly to understand" it,[16] as showing that "He was alive, the same Jesus as before, and showed Himself in recognizable presence and spiritual identity to those who knew him." [17]

The remaining portions of the treatment of the person and work of Christ are marked, on the one hand, by the same large and generous spirit which we have already noted so often, and by the same, often unconscious but invincible, conservatism.

The refuge again and again taken in the mysterious, which is really a confession of failure in the dogmatic task (a failure which all dogmaticians must confess here and there), is no doubt due to the inability of the conservative spirit to pass certain limits in the reconstructive process of formulating a new theology. To discuss these pages adequately here is obviously impossible. We should, however, note that he puts the possibility of the Incarnation in the essential likeness of human nature to the divine; that, while he insists on the unity of the consciousness of Christ, he divides the Logos between the incarnated Son and His work as the medium of God's relation with the Universe; that he recognizes the self-limitation of the divine in entering the human; that the personifying principle in the Incarnation is the divine; and that he adopts the idea that the Incarnation would have taken place, as the crowning act in God's dealings with humanity, even if there had been no sin.

The general weakness of the speculative element in his theology, which we have already remarked, reappears in these positions which cannot be harmonized, and find their only rational justification in "mystery." More successful is he, however, in his treatment of the specific work of Christ as Saviour. Laying a broad foundation for this in the perfect sympathy of Christ with both God and Man, he defines it as a work of *reconciliation between God and man.* He reviews briefly the history of the doctrine for the sake of exhibiting the variety of forms under which it has been viewed by theologians in different ages, and arrives thereby at the position that modern thinkers are at liberty to express the reality underlying them all "in forms that are suited to the life of our own age." [18] Accordingly he defines the relation between God and man involved in this reconciliation as one between *persons,* and not as a legal or a governmental relation.[19] God is always ready to enter into the needed reconciliation and fellowship, but man is not.

"What view of the work of Christ is to be presented here? Not exactly any one of the great historic theories. Not, of course, the

ancient theory that Christ offered a ransom to Satan; not that Christ paid to God a satisfaction equivalent to the sins that God was to forgive; not that Christ was punished for the sins that God was to forgive; not that Christ dealt with God as moral governor, and set right the governmental relations of men; and not that His work was intended exclusively to bring men to repentance.[20] It is out of the two convictions above recorded that the present approach to the subject is made. The work of Christ has been described by various adjectives. It has been called forensic, commercial, vicarious, substitutionary, penal, vice-penal, governmental, ethical, moral. But the adjectives that lead most helpfully into the subject are 'direct' and 'vital'!" [21]

"What is to be said on the subject may be summarized as follows. The action of God in the work of Christ was self-expression with reference to sin,—expression of God as hating sin, as Saviour to sinners, and as a sin-bearer. The twofold object in making this expression was to win men and to satisfy God. In Christ this expression of God was made within humanity: thus the human joined with the divine, man with God, in making the expression, and a new humanity was provided for and established, in which men are reconciled to God." [22]

The influence of this theory on the developing liberalism of the day the following history will reveal; but we must pause at this point for a moment to ask what its bearing was on the character and logical worth of Clarke's own thinking and on the system which he set forth. So far as its relation to God is concerned, it is evident that if an exhibition of the attitude of God towards sin needed to be made in connection with the act of forgiving, that exhibition needed to be repeated with every such act. And, whether needed or not, it is evident that it *is* thus repeated, for still the innocent suffer for the guilty, still the noblest creations of the human mind are met with antagonism which is visited in suffering upon their authors, and still even the most conspicuously innocent suffer, as in the late war millions did, for the sins of those higher up in authority or connected with them by the bonds of daily association. Here then Jesus did what men are perpetually doing, and needed not to be more than a man to do it. Nor did He need to be more than

a man to win those first disciples to the truth and bring them into reconciliation with God. Hence the whole structure of elaborate proof of Christ's divinity is evacuated of proving force because it is evacuated of meaning. Either the liberal or the conservative elements of the system ought to have been pressed more earnestly. The effort to bridge the chasm between them fails, because a keystone was lacking to give the arch strength and permanence.

Acceptable as the book was to a great number of liberally minded men, and helpful as it was at many points, on the whole, therefore, it did not render the service of furnishing a real and adequate dogmatics for the advancing movement. It does, however, in the retrospect exhibit somewhat plainly what the dogmatic task of the present liberalism is. It is not the task of forming an entire and complete system at once. The day of the old "systems," wrought out, as this one was, by a solitary thinker in the seclusion of his own soul, is past. Theology will have in the future years, like philosophy, to be the co-operative work of a great many minds, each performing some part of the great task, each correcting his results by the results of others' studies, till some combining mind shall take them all up into comprehensive consideration, and shall arrange them in a form somewhat complete and authoritative. The task may be begun possibly by some one who shall survey the ground as a whole and set down all that he has himself arrived at in due order and with adequate proofs; but the best that it can do will be partial, confined principally to some great outlines, or to some more carefully developed special field, and will have many a gap to be filled by subsequent writers. One of these writers may develop the doctrines that spring more from personal Christian experience; others may examine the fragments which Christian history has to contribute to the growing system; others still may present a compendium of the sifted and clear teachings of Jesus Himself. The aspect of the study at any one moment will be like that of the enclosure within which a great cathedral is rising. Here is a portion of a column lying on the ground, there is the capital which is to crown it when

carved, yonder one may see the laying of the foundations of the nave deep in the earth, and elsewhere the arches are joining and the details of the perfected building are beginning to appear. But, imperfect as the work may be at any one point, it is imperative that it should be going on, that the thinkers should think rationally, that their thinking should be consistent and comprehensive, that they should test their premises with the greatest care, and that they should say nothing which they do not believe, and have reason to believe, is true and consistent with all other known truth. The question of the real progress of liberalism from this point on will be the question whether it has or has not thinkers of this type engaged in labours of this description.

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1. William N. Clarke, *Biography*, p. 46.
2. William N. Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 262.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 269 f.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
18. The special treatment of this *locus* begins at p. 285. The text is almost entirely a series of quotations from Clarke.
19. This idea was taken up by King, as see below.
20. If this was intended to mark a difference from the Bushnellian theory, it involved a misunderstanding of Bushnell. See F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology*, p. 416 ff.
21. William N. Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 338.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 339. Clarke seems to have been entirely unacquainted with the real meaning of the "governmental theory" as held by later, and (even in spite of forms of expression) by the earlier New England theologians. Professor Park of Andover (my own stenographic notes of his lectures given in the year 1875-76) defined the atonement thus: "The sacrifice of the God-man

which is substituted for the punishment of men, and therefore involves the sole ground on which God is justified and satisfied and the chief motive by which He is influenced and with which He exerts an influence in directly blessing men." This language is technical, and has reference to the elder theories of the Atonement—looks backwards rather than forwards; but it means precisely what Clarke meant by the sentence, "The twofold object in making this expression was to *win* men and to *satisfy* God." The present writer had an article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1891, p. 115) in which the theory was stripped of its legal analogies and governmental phraseology. "It preserves the character of God in the eyes of the sinner and of the universe. None can charge God with indifference to holiness or to sin who sees Him make such a sacrifice as to give His only Son before He will forgive a single sinner." In the same direction, Professor Park had said in his lectures, that if Christ had not been crucified, His sharing the lot of men and submitting to all the pains of body to which He did submit, and to all the mental suffering which constant contact with sinners must have brought to Him, would itself have contained the essential element of the Atonement, because it was thus made evident how much God hated sin; for the suffering of sin must visit all men, even those who have not committed the sin in question, and God *would not permit even his beloved Son* to enter humanity and become a member of the race without compelling *Him also to bear His part in this suffering* consequent upon sin. Thus forgiveness and hate of sin are conjoined in one act by the Atonement. It is thus evident that Clarke, like Bushnell, stood substantially on the ground occupied by the New England Theology.

IX

LIBERALISM UNDER THE FULL INFLUENCE OF EVOLUTION

IN 1891 Dr. Gladden published his book, *Who Wrote the Bible?* The question had become an important one for the Church, for a sufficient number of works had already appeared setting forth the higher criticism, and in America, Driver's *Introduction to the Old Testament* had just appeared (1891), although Nash's *Higher Criticism of the New Testament* did not appear till 1900. "The aim of this volume," he wrote, "is to put into compact and popular form . . . the principal facts upon which scholars are now generally agreed concerning the literary history of the Bible." [1] "What I desire to show is that the work of putting the Bible into its present form was not done in heaven, but on earth; that it was not done by angels, but by men; that it was not done all at once, but a little at a time, the work of preparing and perfecting it extending over several centuries, and employing the labours of many men in different lands and long-divided generations." [2] He adds: "The results of conservative scholarship have been very imperfectly reported to the laity of the churches. Many facts about the Bible are now known by intelligent ministers of which their congregations do not hear. An anxious and not unnatural feeling has prevailed that the faith of the people in the Bible would be shaken if the facts were known. The belief that the truth is the safest thing in the world, and that the things which cannot be shaken will remain after it is all told, has led to the preparation of this volume." [3] He accordingly goes over the whole subject of Biblical criticism, and presents very fairly and with considerable fulness a conservative view of the results which have been arrived at. He disapproves of "the radical and destructive critics" [4] and can certainly be accused of no radicalness when he says of the Pentateuch: "It contains writ-

ings which are as old as the time of Moses, and some that are much older. It is impossible to tell how much of it came from the hand of Moses, but there are considerable portions of it which, although they may have been somewhat modified by later editors, are substantially as he left them." [5] He also holds to the authorship of the apostle John of the Fourth Gospel.[6]

It would be exceedingly interesting to follow his discussions in this very candid and interesting little volume. But we are interested in his doctrinal positions alone, at this time, and hasten to the last chapter which is entitled, "How Much is the Bible Worth?" [7] He summarizes in the positions that the Bible "is not an infallible book," not infallible historically, not infallible scientifically, not infallible morally, since "portions of this revelation involve an imperfect morality," but, speaking positively, the Bible is "a book of righteousness" and a "record of the development of the kingdom of righteousness in the world." It is evident that Dr. Gladden has now travelled far from the position of the unconditioned authority of the Bible in matters of faith.

We need spend the less time upon this book since in 1899 Dr. Gladden published another work entitled *How Much Is Left of the Old Doctrines?* in which he set forth the doctrinal positions at which he had now arrived. The purpose of the book, in his own words, was this:

"Orthodox we know that we are not, if that implies subscription to creeds framed in the sixteenth century; and if liberalism is mainly criticism and denial, or if, as is widely assumed, it signifies defiance of all wholesome restraints and conventions, then we are not liberals. But we still profess and call ourselves Christians; and we need to make clear to our own minds just what this involves, so far as concerns the intellectual life." [8]

And he states his own general position thus:

"I am going to maintain that the intelligent Christian may stand in the presence of modern thought and accept everything that has been proved by science or history or criticism, and not be fright-

ened at all by any of it; firmly believing that the great verities of the Christian faith will still remain untouched." [9]

Into all the details of this luminous and able discussion we shall not be able or need to enter. The attitude towards the Bible is still somewhat to be criticized, for doctrines are accepted and others discussed simply because they are found there or in the creeds of the Church. To drop the idea of the authority of the Bible has not yet come to mean to drop also all those doctrines which depend solely upon the Bible, and are the efforts of men to explain matters which are either better explained in some other way or else need no explanation, such as the Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement. But this, of course, may have its origin in the necessities of the preacher, for this book like others of Dr. Gladden's, was originally prepared for the pulpit.

It is, however, instructive to notice certain things. The existence of God is said, with John Fiske, to be proved by evolution. The argument from environment is also pressed, for how could men have the universal longing for God and conviction of His reality which they have had, if there were no God in their environment? In all this, he does not differ from most Christian thinkers of his time.

But when he comes to the subject of miracles, his failure to detach himself fully from the idea of Scriptural authority becomes more sensible. He makes a place for the miracles of healing which Jesus is said to have wrought, and for other possible occurrences which are not violations of the laws of nature, but hardly for such as the turning of water into wine or the feeding of the five thousand. "They are wonderful to us because they are unusual, or because we do not understand the mode of their operation." And following Whiton, he quotes Augustine that "a miracle is not contrary to nature, but to what we know of nature." [10] But what did Augustine really know about nature? What idea did he have of the laws of nature, or of what must have gone on in those jars of water at Cana if the water was changed into wine, of the many and delicate

hydrocarbons which must be introduced into the water to make it wine, involving the creation then and there of quantities of carbon, and of all the rest? The question is not of operations which we do not understand, but of operations which are contrary to all we do understand, and to the very conditions upon which we know anything of the world of nature. That is the true difficulty of the subject of miracles, and it is a difficulty which Dr. Gladden does not touch. And when he comes to the chapter upon the Bible, he still fails to answer the pivotal and vital question, whether we are or are not to accept a given doctrine simply because it is in the Bible. The failure to answer such a question is to answer it, and answer it wrongly. His positive and practical valuation of the Bible is well brought out in an eloquent passage, which may be thus condensed:

"But this book has another and a deeper interest for me than that which is merely historical or scientific. It shows me the forces that are regenerating the world, but it tells me also some things that I greatly need to know about myself. The spirit that speaks through it bears witness to my spirit that I have many needs which things seen and temporal do not supply. I need forgiveness . . . strength . . . wisdom . . . hope and courage . . . comfort. These are surely the deepest needs of my life. Who can supply them? Where can I find the answer to all these questions? I believe that I find them answered in this book more fully, more perfectly, more convincingly, than anywhere else in the world. I believe that He in whom the promise and the prophecy of this book culminate, and who is called, and rightly called, the Prince of Life and the Light of the World, has a clear and satisfying answer to give to all these questions. And if you and I go to the book with these questions uppermost in our thought, not to cavil nor to criticise, but wishing for peace and power and wisdom and courage and comfort and promise of the life to come, with open mind receiving the influences it is fitted to impart,—we shall find, what countless millions have found, that it is able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ." [11]

Accordingly when he comes to the Trinity in course of his discussion, he begins by noting its character as "inferred from

[the] Scriptures rather than formulated by them." His approach to the doctrine is strictly along the lines of a Biblical discussion. But he does not propose to adopt the historical solutions of the problems of this doctrine. He objects most strenuously to the tritheism of much modern treatment of it. His own doctrine starts with the idea of the divine love, which implies "in His very nature some kind of manifoldness or otherness which could give scope to his affections." [12] God is also eternal Father, and this requires an eternal Son, for there can be no fatherhood which does not carry with it sonship. He also adopts Caird's Hegel-like idea of the Trinity as necessarily involved in all existence and all thinking,[13] but he fails in making any real connection between these speculations and the doctrine of the Trinity which he himself formulates.[14] He quotes favourably both here and elsewhere from Dr. Whiton, but without adopting his more extreme forms of expression.[15] Experience also is urged as giving ground for the doctrine, since we come to know God under three special aspects.[16]

The crux of this discussion is found in Christology; and here Gladden follows Whiton in affirming that God and man are of the same essential nature, but he does not teach that Christ is divine *because* He is human, but rather comes at the matter from the opposite pole—"if He possessed the divine nature He possessed the human nature, for the two are essentially one," [17] though he does not consistently maintain this position. The Incarnation is therefore not "any unnatural event, any interruption or dislocation of the natural order." [18] In the words of Dr. Dale, it is not "an isolated and abnormal wonder." [19] He also favours the idea so much favoured by Andover, that there would have been an incarnation if sin had never entered into the world. On the whole, therefore, Dr. Gladden's view is that Christ was, so far as nature is concerned, when that word is used in the sense in which men generally understand it of men and of God, a mere man; and he omits, or rather declines to state, in just what the uniqueness of Christ consists.[20]

The volume passes over many other points of the doctrinal system, is in fact a rather complete review of them all; but it

will not be necessary to consider them especially, for Dr. Gladden's position and what he has to contribute to the progress of the movement is sufficiently evident from what we have now seen. Nor do his remaining books greatly forward our understanding of his position and services.

We have had occasion frequently to remark in this history on the influence of the theory of evolution upon the various thinkers who have passed under our examination. The theory was "in the air," and hence was influential in an indefinite way upon many who knew little about it with any degree of accuracy or in any considerable extent. Its identification with the speculations of Herbert Spencer, who gave the general impression of being a materialist, and whose God was an "Unknowable," was greatly to its disadvantage, for Christians were certain that they knew something about God by experience, and that the experiences of the soul deserved as much attention and possessed as much validity as the experiences of the bodily eye, assisted in the laboratory by the elaborate instruments of modern research. Some religious thinkers remained still on the platform of Charles Hodge, who declared at the beginning of the discussion of evolution that it was "atheism." But evolution went its way, nevertheless. It penetrated into the historical sciences, and gave us a new Bible. It was the real force lying beneath most of the phenomena of modern progress in theology.

But most of these thinkers, dominated as they were, often unconsciously, by evolution, really knew little about it. Very little serious first-hand study of natural science was done by theologians. Pastors could not study it in their isolated positions far from laboratories and libraries. Even theological professors could not make such studies, remote as most of them were from universities where they were possible. There was at Andover a professorship of the "Relations of Christianity and Science," but the professor never contributed anything to the understanding of natural science by the theologian. How

could he at Andover in her proud seclusion in the depths of rural Massachusetts? He had no tools and no helpers.

It was, therefore, something both new and epoch-making when Dr. Newman Smyth began in New Haven, where he had laboratories and apparatus and the assistance of learned professors, the careful study of the elements of biology for theological purposes. In his first book resulting from these studies he says:

"The next reconstruction of Christian theology will be a vital one; it will result from a deeper knowledge and a truer interpretation of the sacred Scripture of Life, which the hand of God has written in nature. The coming theologian, therefore,—the next successful defender of the faith once given to the saints—will be a trained and accomplished biologist. Not only will his thought, descending from the heights of solitary abstraction, and forsaking the cloistered shades of the schoolmen, ancient and modern, proceed like the wayfaring Son of Man along the familiar paths of human life, in closest touch with the common heart of humanity; but also each organic form will tell to him the story of its origins, and the least living cell will unveil the secret chambers of its divinity. Partial and hurried efforts, indeed, have been made in recent years to set our primal faiths in their large vital connections;—Mr. Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* and Mr. Kidd's *Social Evolution* are stimulating efforts in this direction; but the value of these first endeavors lies in their true apprehension of the work needing to be done, rather than in their permanent contribution to its solution. The science of biology itself has been far too crude, and its theories are still too tentative, and even conflicting at many points, to warrant us as yet in building upon them over-confidently the higher conclusions of the Christian reason. Nevertheless, within the past thirty years, and since Darwin, some sure ground has been gained by evolutionary science, and biology in particular is opening fields of knowledge which invite fresh inquiry on the part of thoughtful believers." [21]

In this book, *The Place of Death in Evolution* (1897), Dr. Smyth begins his discussion with the primal cell which may alone constitute a living being. This propagates itself by the simple process of self-division. "There was no such thing as

death, or at least nothing like a dead body, when life first stirred and for some indefinite period after life began to increase and multiply in earthly matter." [22]

"The first one-celled organism does not exist for a season, produce another like itself, and then decay, and die, and totally disappear; it does nothing of the sort; the one thing it does is, not to die, but to live on. It succeeds in living on and on, by a very simple yet persistent process; for after a while it divides itself into two cells, each like itself, and thus it continues to exist, living in these cells a double life; and this process of simple division and multiplication is carried on for a number of successive generations without the appearance of any dead ancestor, or of anything like that which we mean when we speak of a dead body. The simplest forms of life, if left to themselves, . . . to follow their natural course, do not die; they bud and divide, they increase and multiply." [23]

This is potential immortality. But the investigations of Maupas brought to light the fact that in unicellular animals, in which it was already known that there were *two* methods of reproduction, one by fission, as described above, and the other "by something resembling fertilization, through the meeting and partial blending of the contents of two cells,—a conjugation of cells,"—especially among the higher *protozoa,* "the preservation of species is maintained by occasional intervention of this higher method of conjugation, and that without it the power of cell division and multiplication becomes enfeebled and in time is completely lost." It may be well to intercalate the observation, for the sake of reminding the reader of the immense pains taken in all these investigations to arrive at the truth, that Maupas followed this matter through *six hundred generations* of these unicellular organisms! [24]

"A double line of life is thus observed: the one, that composed of the sexually reinforced cells, branching up and bringing forth more fruit; the other, that composed of the isolated, unreinforced cells, continuing for a while, but at length, as though overshadowed by the more fruitful branch, and as no longer advantageous for nature's end of a more abundant life, left to wither, and because no longer useful, to come at length to an end. This end of this less advan-

tageous method of the propagation of life is death; thus nature produces and abandons the first known body of death in the history of life." [25]

Dr. Smyth continues:

"As life becomes more organized and complex, death prevails. It comes to reign on earth because it comes to serve. At length in the history of life a living form arose so multicellular and so well organized that it ceased to continue the course of life simply by dividing and multiplying itself into daughter cells; it had acquired the power of giving up its life for another; it died in order that its offspring might continue its life in forms struggling to still higher organization, and better fitted to survive while it must perish. One parent form passes away in order that others may catch up the motion of life and in turn transmit to others life's rhythm and joy. Thus *death comes in to help,* and not merely to hurt; to help life further on and higher up, not to put a stop to life. It evidently became advantageous to life as a whole that certain primitive forms should be left by the way to perish. The column of the living marches on, though individual organisms fall by the wayside; life ever regnant continues through death and past death on to more life and richer. In other words, in the first struggle of animate existence, by bringing into the field regiments of better equipped forms, life scores a victory, although to win it, it must leave its dead upon the field." [26]

Thus Dr. Smyth establishes his first point, that death "comes in to serve" and is thus a benefit to the race. His second point is brought out in the following passage, immediately following the last quoted:

"This fact of the utility of death for life will become still further intelligible if we attempt to conceive what might have been the result if death had not kept the stream of life from clogging up and becoming stagnant. For if death had not entered, then the more finely organized, the more masterful, and the fairer forms of life would not have appeared. There would have been no stimulus and response of life for their production. There would have been no call for their appearance under the law of natural selection; they would not have been needed for the maintenance of life. Death breaks up

the crust of nature so that the germinant life may spring up, and grow into the light. Death ends the monotony of the same kind of continued life and gives it occasion for a new spring and existence upon a higher level. The course of life would have been arrested, had not death come with helpful hand to clear away products of life no longer useful, to remove outworn and mutilated forms, and to let the deepening stream flow on. If we suppose other laws and processes of nature to remain such as we know them to be, we may assert that there could have been made on this earth no garden, no flowers, no birds, no leafy trees for them to sing in, had it not been for the entrance and . . . ministry of death; had death never been sent along life's way to take from life its useless burdens, and to set its energies free for better adaptations and results ever more fair and fruitful. Man himself might not have been made of the dust of the earth, if that dust had not been mingled of the elements of the dead forms which were before him. We owe our human birth to death in nature. The earth before us has died that we might live. We are the living children of a world that has died for us." [27]

The remainder of this work we need not delay upon. It was occupied with the explanation, upon lines easily anticipated from the position already taken, that the evil of the world works out good, that "the new teleology," developing a new form of the old argument from design, favours a moral interpretation of the universe and the supremacy of the spiritual nature of man, and thus prepares for an argument for immortality. When man has finally advanced to the full development of the spiritual, there is no more need of death, which was introduced to favor just that development from which the spiritual nature of man has come, and hence death shall be abolished, or "finally discharged," as Dr. Smyth puts it. Thus the method which has developed spiritual personality by the agency of death and personal suffering is seen in its larger aspects to be a "method of benevolence."

It may be remarked in passing that Dr. Smyth, whether by direct connection with Bergson or by happy coincidence, has fallen upon one of the most illuminating of that philosopher's ideas about the plan involved in evolution. Bergson illustrates it by an artist's experiences in painting a picture. His plan in

painting grows as he paints, and the picture finally, while it is such a one as he planned, is at many points different and better than his plan for it. Smyth puts it: "Evolution . . . proceeds more like a process of thought than like a piece of handiwork." [28]

In 1902 Smyth continued his publications in the department of natural theology by issuing *Through Science to Faith,* a volume containing lectures delivered before the Lowell Institute in Boston. In this book his studies in natural science come to a large and rich fruitage. He begins his argument with the discovery of the cell as the unit of life and goes minutely into an account of the structure of the cell and the process of cell division. He shows throughout a large acquaintance with biological literature and with the best discussions of the points which he wishes to make but is individual and creative in it all. The main argument of the discussion is directed to establish the doctrine of "direction" in nature, from which follows immediately the doctrine of a directing God. He discovers "direction of motion in the inorganic world," that "from given primitive conditions, the existing universe has resulted in a regular and causal sequence of events." [29] Its work passes on "to the higher vital order." But still more we see direction in the organic world, as in the facts of heredity, among which we discover how the nucleus of the first cell from which a living being, like a man, proceeds, has in it elements determinative of his future character and history. I quote a characteristic passage:

"It is now scientifically known that a few dots of microscopic matter, more or less, within the egg, determine the whole subsequent life history; and further, that from these determinants put at the beginning in the egg,—an exact number of them for each species,—the embryological development proceeds with an unvarying constancy in response to the environment. Two facts here are significant. The one is this: for each species the number of chromosomes in the nucleus of the egg-cell is always the same. The chromosomes, as we have seen, are the loops of darkly staining matter in the cell, which are exactly halved in each division of it. Now the

remarkable discovery has been made that these chromosomes vary in number with different species, but that in every egg for each species the same number of them is to be counted. Each species has its specific number of chromosomes which regularly recurs in the division of all of its cells, and from which no variations are known to occur. For instance—to mention a few so as to make this characteristic stand clearly out—the egg of the worm *Ascaris,* one variety of it, has two chromosomes; in the egg of the mouse the number is twenty-four, and a similar number characterizes also the trout and the lily; in the egg of the grasshopper the number is twelve; in the ovum of the ox sixteen; of man the same number or possibly more. The constancy of these specific loops of matter within the egg is almost startling in its significance. . . . A specific unmistakable sign of the way in which life is to go has been put by nature far away toward the beginnings in every least egg. . . . By means of certain minute particles of matter and their arrangement within the nucleus, the question has been already settled for each egg into what it shall grow,—a thread of grass, a worm, a deer in the forest, a bird in the air, a child in a human home." [30]

This direction in nature is seen by Dr. Smyth to possess also an intelligent character. We see this in the *orderliness* of nature; in the fitness of part to part in the developing animal; in the sign of increasing vital value, the capacity for living and pleasure in life; in the limits fixed to development by organic matter, the properties of the cell, the mutual relations of organic forms; all of which means one thing only, and that is intelligence in the directive force. Bergson has emphasized the thought that the whole process of creative evolution is directed to a moral world,—"at the root of life there is an effort to engraft on to the necessity of physical forces the largest amount of *indetermination.*" [31] Smyth advances the evidence that there is a "moral character" in the direction manifested in nature. The argument is continued through "the coming of the individual," retrogression and restoration in evolution, the principle of completion, to the "prophetic value of unfinished nature." It gives throughout the most abundant evidence of the great value of these studies to the theologian and the preacher.

In 1916 Dr. Smyth published the work which he long had

been in preparing, *The Meaning of Personal Life*. It continues the work begun in a former volume and carries to completion the apology for Christian positions in its particular direction. He takes a "starting-point . . . as far back as physical science may enable us to go," which is at those facts as to the composition of the ultimate atoms which the most recent discoveries have laid bare. Back with the electrons themselves, "our interest lies in putting the old question, What sign showest thou?

"For one thing, these primal invisibles show an active aptitude for combination; and fitness for combination characterizes further the atoms charged with their attractions. In this elemental fitness for combination a sign is given. It is a mark of some structural possibility. But a hint, indeed, the structure of the atom may be of something greater that shall follow because it is; yet evidently these electrons have come to do something—they are here that more may be. Herein there lies the potency of a forming finite order out of an infinite formlessness." [32]

Matter itself is still more clearly fit for the arrival of something more in the world, and that is the organic kingdom. A keen initial discussion of mechanism as an explanation of development brings the chapter to a close, with a quotation from Royce:

"Over against a too easy contentment with the experimental mechanics of life, there is enough in the considerations which we have thus far adduced to justify the lifting up of the idealist's view as at least a possible perception of the reality. 'Look upon all these things descriptively, and you shall see nothing but matter moving instant after instant, each instant containing in its full description the necessity of passing over into the next. Nowhere will there be for descriptive science any genuine novelty or any discontinuity admissable. But look at the whole appreciatively, historically, synthetically, as a musician listens to a symphony, as a spectator watches a drama. Now you shall seem to have seen, in phenomenal form, a story.' " [33]

It would lead us too far from the purpose of our present investigation, did we follow minutely the progressive argument

of this great book, the worthy crown of a laborious literary life. Dr. Smyth follows the ascending forms of life along the pathway of evolution, and finds "premonitions of intelligence" in the earliest living forms, which increase and assume definiteness as the series advances. Even where reflex actions are marked, and where mechanism would consequently seem to reign undisturbed, the *control* of reflex action shows that there is more than mechanism.[34] Instinct (the various theories of which are discriminatingly reviewed) is seen as evincing "control of life *for further ends of life*; it is, in a word, a means of life, and as such must have some meaning in the evolution of life." [35] And thus, even at this early point, the difficulties of reducing mind to matter are seen to increase as we follow the course of evolution onward.

We have already seen evidences of the influence of Bergson upon Dr. Smyth's thinking, and now here we find a cordial recognition of the value of his work, albeit with a characteristic hesitation to commit himself to complete acceptance of Bergson's positions. In his treatment both of instinct and of memory, he draws largely from Bergson,[36] giving what I may venture to say I consider a prophecy of the path upon which the liberal movement is destined to advance till it cordially joins forces with "radical empiricism," producing that co-operation between the two from which William James expected "a new era of religion as well as of philosophy." Smyth's method is that of the recognition of all facts, inner and outer, as is the method of the empiricists, and he depends, as do they, upon the collaboration of many thinkers for the perfection of the work of philosophy. The system of empiricism will never be James-ism, or the ism of any other philosopher, nor will the theology of the future be anything like "Augustinianism" or "Calvinism"—something, indeed, broader and truer than any one thinker could produce—neither will it ever be complete; but always growing, always modifying, it will always reflect all that men actually know and believe they know, not all that they imagine.

We therefore must take leave of this work with but scanty

review; but as we turn the leaves we note such captions as "energy in thinking," "feeling," energy known in the personal will," and easily infer how the argument is progressing. Bergson's suggestions in reference to the will, in accord with such American empiricists as John Dewey, as the action of the *whole man* rather than of a single faculty of the man, are adopted substantially, and the swelling discussion goes on through "body and mind" to "individuality," and thus we arrive at the full personality of man as a spiritual force in the midst of the world of matter, of it, and yet above it.

There is, however, one chapter of this book, that upon "The Fulfillment of Personal Life in Jesus Christ," which, while not transcending the purely apologetic message of the work, necessarily affords some hints of the progress of Dr. Smyth's mind in reference to matters of Christian doctrine. He proposes a "way of approach" to Christ's unique personality which has "hardly been attempted," an approach through nature, viz., the interpretation of Christ through personality as known in man, when viewed in all the expansion of its limitless possibilities. Along the track of advancing personality, among primitive man, cave-dwellers, civilized man, we see now and then a "signal increase of spiritual power . . . at some favorable point." There was such in Christ. But we begin with "what may be held to be historically true concerning the life of Jesus." Thus we gather that He was endowed with beauty as well as physical perfection. His healings do not seem at all incredible, in the light of what we know as possible to those highly endowed physically; nor do His miracles. Dr. Smyth's trumpet emits upon this theme a rather uncertain sound: "Our present concern is not with the miracles of healing as miracles." He even says, "The question of the miraculous resolves itself in the last analysis into a question of degrees." It certainly does not! The difference between healing a disordered mind and turning water into wine is not a question of degrees. With his abundant knowledge of science, Dr. Smyth ought to have fairly faced this subject. To quote Augustine, that "miracle is not contrary to nature, but only to what we know of nature," is a piti-

ful example of theological conservatism. The truth is just the reverse. *The more* we have learned of nature, *the more* the miracle has taken its place either among the ordinary events of the world or among *the delusions of humanity*. Aside from this aberration, the course of the chapter is to interpret Christ in the light of the highest known of personality, as Himself its completion and crown. Of course, this is not a distinct statement that Christ was, as far as *nature* is concerned, a mere man, but it is closely akin to that view, and is allied with the efforts others had made in our developing liberalism to separate themselves from the theories of Nice and Chalcedon.

With closing chapters on "The Creative Spirit of Christianity," "The Future Personal Life," and "Personal Realism," the book is brought to its conclusion. The argument for the future life is based, as already intimated in previous works, on the "survival-value" of such a being as man. Personal realism is maintained partly against pragmatism, which Smyth wrongly understands—at least wrongly, if he has in mind the presentation of it by James—as teaching that truth is only the greater probability, and that we have no knowledge of reality. James did not mean this, although from the playfulness and exuberance of his style, he is, I must confess, somewhat hard to understand. Nor did Bergson so discard the intellectual element as Smyth thinks, for he maintains only that the *spatialized* intellect, that logic, does not comprehend life fully, for life is not that exact matter of syllogisms which, for the convenience of practical dealing with the world, it assumes. But these are trifles. The greatness of the argument remains, and we must lay down the book with the conviction that Dr. Smyth has rendered it absolutely necessary, not only for liberalism, but for every theology, to learn from God's revelation of Himself in nature as studied by science, as well as from the human heart and from history. Biology has been permanently set in its place among the essential elements of a theological education. To have done so much is enough for any man!

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8. Washington Gladden, *How Much Is Left of the Old Doctrines?*, p. 1
9. *Ibid.*, p. 15 f.
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12. *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 141.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-146.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 154 ("far from wishing to set up any dogmatic formula") compared with p. 173 ("the ideal man . . . therefore the manifestation of God").
21. Newman Smyth, *The Place of Death in Evolution*, p. vii ff.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
24. Professor Woodruff of Yale in 1913 had observed 3,600 generations of the paramecium. Newman Smyth, *Constructive Natural Theology*, p. 18.
25. Newman Smyth, *The Place of Death in Evolution*, p. 21 f.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 28 f. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
27. *Ibid.*, p. 29 ff.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
29. Newman Smyth, *Through Science to Faith*, p. 54.
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31. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (English translation), p. 114 *et mul. al.*
32. Newman Smyth, *The Meaning of Personal Life*, pp. 5-7.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
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X

OBERLIN AND HENRY C. KING

AT OBERLIN the transition from the old to the new proceeded in a manner quite ideal. The theology of President Fairchild had never been harsh and dogmatic, in the bad sense of that world,[1] but it was the old evangelical system, nevertheless. Oberlin had ranged itself against the "new departure" of Andover in 1884 and following years, and the contest against the liberal movement had been long maintained by the *Bibliotheca Sacra* under the editorship of Professors G. F. Wright, W. G. Ballantine, and F. H. Foster, and after the retirement of the latter two under Professor Wright alone. But Oberlin was ripening for change, and when President Fairchild resigned the professorship of theology in 1897, his place was filled by the appointment of Henry Churchill King, under whom the transition was effected quietly and without friction. Professor King was a graduate of Oberlin in both college and seminary, and was thoroughly known by his colleagues, and possessed their entire confidence. He had been a professor in the college since 1884, and had latterly occupied the chair of philosophy, during which occupancy he had spent a year in Berlin. He had added to his college course in Oberlin a year in Harvard, where he proved himself a scholar of rare fineness and perfection, and took the degree of A.M. His teaching of philosophy had made him thoroughly familiar with the system of Lotze, and in Germany he had become unusually versed in the teaching of Albrecht Ritschl, to whom Lotze's philosophy is the best introduction. He had thus escaped from what provincialism might possibly be charged against Oberlin, and was prepared to take a large view of the field to which he was now called. His inner, personal fitness for the especial task which had fallen to him was even greater, for to an irenic and co-

operative temper, he added the most modest and sincere unselfishness, and sought nothing for himself. The world has recognized this personal quality and has heaped him with opportunities and honours of every description.

At the time of King's accession to the theological chair Oberlin was ripe for the change. The elective system in the seminary had broadened and deepened its instruction. Professor Ballantine, under the pressure of the new system, had been compelled to give a fresh attention to the higher criticism of the Old Testament, and had gradually yielded to the arguments in its favour. Professor E. I. Bosworth had succeeded to the New Testament chair and had come under the influence of the new movement. There were no members of the faculty likely to resist vigorously a modernization of the theology of the school.

Professor King opened his more public theological work with a volume on *Reconstruction in Theology* (1901) in which he presented the need of reconstruction, arising from the new world in which we find ourselves, traced the various influences of this new world upon theology, and indicated briefly the resulting reconstruction. The keynote of this reconstruction is the "restatement of theology in terms of personal relation." [2] The work is distinguished among other books of the same general purpose by its largeness of view, and its entire fearlessness and candor. No portion of the field escapes the writer's attention, and to none does he intend to give less than the fullest justice. But his conception of the possibilities open to any one theologian is modest. His aim should be not to create a great and final theological system, but "to make real to his own generation the great abiding truths of Christianity." [3] The new world in which he finds himself is moved by a "revolutionary force," but this is not merely scientific, indeed is spiritual still more, and is really "Christ's own mind." [4] And the great spiritual conviction of the time is that of the sacredness of the individual person, the sacredness of his ethical life.

Unfortunately, this and one other book remain the only source of knowledge of King's views in theology to which the

public has access. He published no "system." Indeed, he did not view the preparation of a system as any part of his proper work. Each worker in theology might hope to contribute something to the developing system of theological truth, but his task was temporary and modest. The whole direct object of the present book was to clear the ground, open the way for advance, and show upon what principles, and with what aims theological reconstruction must proceed. He therefore discussed in successive chapters the need of reconstruction, the new world, the historical criticism of the Bible and inspiration, the sacredness of the person, Christ as the supreme person.

King had the advantage in this work of the achievements of his predecessors in making room in current thinking for the theory of evolution and for its application to the study of the Bible. He can, in fact, add something to the understanding of the theory, by emphasizing the element of real progress, of the entrance at various points of what is really new,—an idea subsequently emphasized by the phrase "emergent evolution." His treatment of the higher criticism is equally fresh, broad, and free. "The higher criticism of the Old Testament is only an honest inductive study of the facts about the historical revelation of God to determine, just as in a truly scientific study of nature, how God actually did proceed, not how he *must* have proceeded." It seeks "to determine [the Bible's] unity, age, authorship, literary form, and reliability." [5] To such an inductive study no reasonable objection can be made.

On the question of the reality of the Biblical miracles King took, however, a distinctly apologetic attitude. He correctly states the question as one of fact, but his argument that they were facts curiously overlooks three facts which fairly stare the *a posteriori* investigator in the face, viz., (1) that the Gospels were written in a credulous age, (2) that there is a universal tendency in religions to surround their founder with miracles, as in the case of Buddha, of Mohammed (who himself denied miracles), and even of John Alexander Dowie; and, especially, (3) that the Biblical miracles seem actually to effect nothing in the way of establishing the authority of those

who wrought them, even according to the Biblical records themselves.[6] He is at this point distinctly reactionary.

What hints King gives of his views on the great questions of theology are too obscure to admit of positive criticism. Still, he makes suggestions which may appear in the future to have had an influence on the course of thought, and which should receive some notice here. In respect to the person of Christ, he is particularly vague. He evidently rejects the ancient formulations of Nice and Chalcedon. There is no trace of a doctrine of the two natures, human and divine. Christ is the personal revelation of God, who, since He is a person, can be revealed only by a person, and that a person "whose character we can transfer, feature by feature, to God without any sense of defect." The "revelation of God's character, too, must be in a sphere we can wholly understand and judge, and therefore human in human relations—a human person." Hence King's position, so far, is that Christ is truly and properly a man. But he also applies to Him the term "divine."[7] What does he mean by this?

To understand him it will be necessary, I think, to go back to Lotze, whose influence upon King is to be traced upon many a page of his writings. Lotze taught that the "substance" of anything, even of our own souls, is unknown and unknowable to us. We know it simply phenomenally. Ritschl, who was philosophically in close agreement with Lotze,[8] taught that in Christ we find the attributes of God—His love, holiness, etc., —and that therefore He has the *value* of God; and that in this His deity (*Gottheit*) consisted. King himself defines the "essence" of anything to consist in the purpose for which it exists.

With these statements in mind we may understand more readily the following passage:

> "I should myself add . . . the consideration that, with the teleological view of essence or substance which we have found philosophy asserting, a true metaphysical view of the being of Christ could be stated only in terms of the personal purpose of God concerning him; and since we find the very meaning of the life of Christ in the fact that God is making His supreme self-revelation through Him, God's

purpose concerning Christ was absolutely unique, and we can say, in strict metaphysical terms, that Christ is of one essence with the Father, [*i.e.*, has the same purpose]. Christ is thus not only morally and spiritually at one with God, and so absolutely unique in his perfect response to the will of God, but also may be said to be metaphysically at one with God, when essence is interpreted teleologically. The newer and the older, the personal and the metaphysical, forms of statement would thus fall together; but there can be no doubt that the personal and practical form of the confession of Christ's divinity is, for the vast majority of men, much the more rational and surer test." [9]

There are some hints regarding other modifications of earlier forms of theology in this book; but they are so much more abundant and clear in the subsequent book that we may defer them to a later consideration.

That book is King's *Theology and the Social Consciousness* (1902). The contention of the work is that theology needs to be restated in terms of personality.

The tendency of the New England theology was towards making love the determinative element in theological formulations.[10] This conception depended upon the fact that Jesus made love towards God and towards men the determinative element in both ethics and religion. But it had never been rigorously carried through the entire system. King proposed to do this.

He was led to undertake this effort in part by the rise of the new science of sociology. This science had had an origin in circles not theological in the narrower sense of that word. Spencer, who gave it its name, and Giddings, who gave it its best formulation in America (1896), were neither of them theologians. But sociology had early been taken up by Gladden, who found himself compelled by events in his own parish to take up first the labour question, and afterwards other kindred topics. He also presented his theological views in a series of books, which are strong in their antagonism to Calvinism, both old-school and new; but he did not organize his views about any principle, although he did state that "the one ruling con-

ception in the present theology is the immanence of God." [11] F. G. Peabody also wrote in 1900 on *Jesus Christ and the Social Question.* But no writer had taken up the problem of the Church as King conceived it. This was nothing less than the formation of a new system of theology. It was not his purpose to attempt such a task in this book. But the outlines of the coming system were in his mind, and it was his purpose in the present essay to give suggestions, and to clear still more the path upon which he thought the future theologian must go forward. And it is perfectly evident that he had entirely abandoned Calvinism, even the mildest forms of it, as a system, and had his eye directed towards something absolutely different from it and absolutely the product of the new age. In this view of the problem, as well as in his treatment of the social consciousness itself, King was far ahead of his time.

The principle upon which he proposes that the future theology should be built is "reverence for personality." Thus, he says,

> "the steadily deepening sense that every person has a value not to be measured in anything else, and is in himself *sacred to God and man*—this it is which marks unmistakably every step in the progress of the individual and of the race." [12]

Personality does not mean to him the possession of certain faculties, such as intellect, conscience, and free will, alone. That is the mere framework of personality. It must have a content.

> "The sense of likemindedness, of mutual influence, of the value and sacredness of the person, of obligation, and of love— . . . all these, with their implied demands, only point to what a person must be if he is to be fully personal." [13]

Thus the very definition of "person" has in mind the holy person, the child of God, and to reverence that personality involves not merely to respect it which shall prevent all trenching upon its perfect freedom of choice and action, but to desire and seek to promote the holy ideal which lay at the basis of its very creation. It involves such a lofty aspiration.

Taking the social consciousness as his starting point, King defines religion itself as personal.

"Religion, . . . if it is to be most real to men of the social consciousness, must be personally conceived, that is, must be distinctly seen to be a personal relation of man to God. And this conception, as the highest we can reach, is to be followed fearlessly to the end; only guarding it against wrong inferences from the simple transference to God of finite conditions, and recognizing exactly in what respects the personal relation to God is unique." [14]

This definition is carefully "guarded" in the *Reconstruction in Theology*.

"The God with whom we come into personal relation is not the God of mere religious fancy or mystical experience, nor the God of philosophical speculation, but the God revealed concretely, unmistakably, in the ethical and spiritual personality of Jesus Christ. He alone is the supreme and religiously adequate revelation of God. There are other partial manifestations of God without and within, but only he who has seen Christ has adequately seen the Father. The Christian seeks personal relation with God *in Christ*. . . . Moreover, when we speak of a personal relation to God, we, of course, do not mean that we can give exactly the same kind of reality to it as to our relations to other persons who are to us compelling sensuous facts. . . . Nor . . . are we asserting a relation of familiar equality with God. Any true human friendship, we find, shows itself in marked reverence for the personality of the other. The divine friendship is not less real, then, that it implies devout reverence and godly fear—a clear sense of the moral rebuke of the revelation of God in Christ, as well as of the manifestation of His grace. Aesthetic admiration for Christ is no true love for Christ." [15]

In his understanding of personality, King finds a basis for an "increased hope for men." There are no men unfit for immortality by nature. Reverence for personality will give one "sympathy with men," and "belief" in them.

"I have not the slightest desire to reduce the concrete, ethical, definitely personal religion of Jesus to the ambiguities of philosophical dreamers; the world is going to become more and more consciously and avowedly Christian. But I do not on the other hand

. . . wish to shut my eyes to great essential likenesses in fundamental faiths and ideals and aspirations because they are clothed in different garb. The life and teaching of Jesus have worked and are working in the consciousness of men far beyond the limits our feeble faith is inclined to prescribe. There is doubtless much 'unconscious Christianity,' much 'unconscious following of Christ.' And we are only following Christ's own counsel when we refuse to forbid the man who is working a good work in His name, though he follows not with us. Certainly, if we accept the witness of a man's life against the witness of his lips when the witness of his lips is right, we ought to accept the witness of his life against the witness of his lips when the witness of the lips is wrong. . . . *All men are moral and spiritual beings, made for relation to one another and to God;* . . . they have ideals that have a wide outlook implicit in them, and have some loyalty to these ideals; . . . they do have a sense of obligation; . . . the moral and spiritual life is a reality, a great universal human fact." [16]

The unity of the race is similarly discussed.

"The theologian believes, more than he did, in a race whose unity is pre-eminently moral, rather than physical or mystical. . . . Are we prepared to be thoroughly loyal to just this conception of the unity of the race throughout our theological thinking; and so to give up cherished ideas of 'common,' 'transmitted,' 'inherited,' or 'racial' sin or righteousness, of 'mystical solidarity,' and racial ideal representation, etc.? . . . We are members one of another for good and for ill, one in the unity of the inevitable, mutual influence of likeminded persons." [17]

In the discussion of the mutual influence of men, which he is conducting at this point, King comes next to the "deepening sense of sin," and then to the most important of the suggestions with which this book is filled, to the topic of "redemption" and allied subjects.

"I become in character most certainly and rapidly like that man with whom I constantly am, to whose influence I most fully surrender, and who gives himself most completely to me. . . . Character is truly and inevitably contagious in an association in which there is mutual surrender. Character is caught, not taught. The inner

strength of another life to which we surrender is, as Phillips Brooks somewhere says, 'directly transmissible.' . . . One might still think here only of an example. The other life, however, must be more to me than mere example. For the highest attainment in character I need the association of some highest one, who will give himself to me unreservedly. Redemption to real righteousness of life cannot be without cost to the redeemer. And it is a psychologist, facing the ultimate problem of will-strengthening, who urges in words that might seem almost to look to Christ: 'The prophet has drunk more deeply than any one of the cup of bitterness; but his countenance is so unshaken, and he speaks such mighty words of cheer, that his will becomes our will, and our life is kindled at his own.' [18] It *is* the one great certain road to character—as it is to appreciation of every value—to stay in the presence of the best in self-surrender to it. No wonder Christ said, 'I am the Way.' . . . Is not the precise method of redemption, then, to no small degree, cleared for us right here, in this conviction of the social consciousness of the contagion of the good in a self-surrendering association—the only solidarity of which we can be certain? Christ saves us in the only certain way we know that any man is ever saved to better living, through direct contagion of character, through His immediate influence upon us. The power of the influence of a redeeming person must depend upon two facts: the richness of the self that is given, and the depth of the giving. The supremely redeeming power must be the giving of the richest self unto the uttermost. God has not yet done His best for men until He gives himself in the fullest manifestation which can be made through man to men, and gives to the uttermost, with no drawing back from any cost. Is it not because, after all, back of all theories, and even in spite of theories, men have seen in the life and death of Christ just this eternal giving of God Himself, that they have been caught up into some sharing of the same spirit, and so felt working directly and immediately upon them the supremest redeeming power the world knows? The Cross of Christ has been God's not only *saying,* 'I will help that child to conquer himself, whatever it costs me,' but God doing it, and perpetually doing it. Not less than that must be the cost of a man's redemption. . . .

"It is not likely that a purely ethical and spiritual view of the Atonement, which sees the problem as a strictly personal one—and this seems to the writer the only true position—can ever succeed in the hearts of the great body of the membership of the churches,

if it cannot show, at the same time, that it is able in some real way to take up into itself these thoughts of substitution and propiation. . . . What, now, makes it possible for a man to expect, in any sense, a favorable judgment of God upon his life? If God makes any separation of men in the world to come, He certainly cannot divide them into perfect and imperfect men. Judged by any complete standard, all are imperfect. Or if, without separation, God in any sense, in the most inner way, passes judgment, how does approval fall upon any? And upon whom does it fall? Must not every man who wishes to be clear and honest with himself fairly face these questions? . . . What is it that satisfies the father [in any case of a child's disobedience]? Upon what does he rely in his hope for matured character in the child? What, in Biblical language, 'covers' for the father the actual disobediences of the past and the certain disobediences of the future, and enables him in a sense to ignore both in his approval of the child? Certainly, the present purpose of the child, the child's honest intention to coöperate with the father in the father's purpose for him. Yes; but as certainly, it seems to the writer, *not that alone*. The father's hope for his child's steady growth in righteousness depends not only on the child's present intention, but much more upon the father's own intention never to give up in his attempt at any cost to help that child to conquer himself. The father may be said here in a true sense to propitiate himself; and his own fixed purpose has become a partial substitute for the wavering purpose of the child. . . . We have seen, it may be hoped, just how God's self-revealing in Christ does have this actual power, and becomes thus a true propitiation in the highest moral sense, in the only sense in which God can wish a propitiation, and in the only sense in which we can ever need a propitiation." [19]

In the latter part of this book, King discusses more at length the topics of the person of Christ and the nature of God. We are able to see more clearly from this treatment what he might have done for other doctrines of historical systematic theology, if he had arranged all his ideas in a systematic form, or, in other words, written a "System."

"[The] recognition of the personal in Christ will mean, first, that we are to conceive Christ as a *personal* revelation of God, rather

than as containing in Himself a divine substance. It cannot forget that, if God is a person, and men are persons, the adequate self-revelation of God to men can be made only in a truly personal life; and that men need above all, in their relation to God, some manifestation of His ethical will, and this can be shown only in the character of a person. A merely metaphysical conception of the divinity of Christ in terms of substance or essence, as these are commonly thought, must therefore wholly fail to satisfy. We must be able to recognize and bow before the personal will of the personal God revealed in Christ, if we are really to find God through Him. A strong sense of the personal, then, such as the social consciousness evinces, must see in Christ, above all, a personal revelation of a person. . . .

"It is of the greatest importance for Christian thought that it still keep Christ's own absolute subordination of both the miraculous and metaphysical to the moral and the spiritual. . . . His whole ministry evinces the greatest pains upon this point. And he evidently thinks a theory of his metaphysical relation to God (as ordinarily conceived) of so little vital importance that even such slight hints as we get of it in the New Testament apparently do not come from him at all." [20]

There follows at this point an enumeration of "the moral and spiritual grounds of the supremacy of Christ," which do not differ materially from those commonly brought forward in good preaching and standard treatises of a long past. He is "the greatest in the greatest sphere," the only "sinless and impenitent one," "has such a character that we can transfer it, feature by feature, to God," "able to redeem all men," the only one "who can call out absolute trust," the only life in whom God finds us and we find God—all of which culminates in the position already presented in the quotation from *Reconstruction in Theology*.[21]

King passes next to the doctrine of God. He proposes "the steady carrying through of the completely personal in the conception of God."

"Now, such an attempt . . . is not to be thought of as a running away from a thoroughgoing metaphysical investigation. It rather takes the ground . . . of what may be called, in Professor Howi-

son's language, personal idealism; and holds that spirit, person *is* for us the ultimate metaphysical fact: the one reality to which we have immediate access; the reality from which all our metaphysical notions are originally derived; and, in consequence, the one reality which we can take as the key to the understanding of all else. And it believes that even essence and substance, the great words of the old metaphysics, can be really understood only as they are interpreted in personal terms. Ultimately, theology would hold, this would mean the interpretation of the essence of things in terms of the purpose of God concerning them." [22]

Passing on, now, to the development of this thought, King emphasizes the view of the "eternal truths" as "the eternal modes of God's actual activity," of the creation as an "eternal creation," of the unity of God "not as monotonous self-identity, but only as consistency of meaning." Under the idea of God's personality, "history is not mere natural process . . . but a movement in which men effectively cooperate, . . . and demands a God who cares, loves, and guides." And God, since He loves, is "the great Servant." His development of the doctrine of the Trinity requires, however, a more adequate quotation.

"The doctrine of the Triunity seems to have been originally intended to enable the Church to hold the divinity of Christ. . . . [In these days,] none of us—not the most orthodox—really finds the *reasons* for holding the divinity of Christ in the doctrine of the Triunity. . . . That doctrine is, at the very most, only our philosophical supplement intended to bring, that which on other grounds we have come to believe, into unity with our thought of God. . . . The Biblical Trinity is, in truth, what it has sometimes been called, the Trinity of redemption. . . . Here there are three great facts. First, the Fatherhood of God, that God is in His very being Father, Love, self-manifesting as light, self-giving as life, self-communicating, pouring Himself out into the life of His children, wishing to share His highest life with them, every one. Second, the concrete, unmistakable revelation of the Father in Christ, revealed in full ethical perfection, as an actual fact to be known and experienced; no longer an unknown, hidden, or only partially and imperfectly revealed God, but a real, living God of character, counting

as a real, appreciable, but fully spiritual fact in the real world. And, third, the Father revealing Himself by His Spirit in every *individual* heart that opens itself to Him, in a constant, intimate, divine association, which yet is never obtrusive, but reverent of the man's personality, making possible to every man the ideal conditions of the richest life." [23]

Reverence for personality which should be characteristic of man in his relations both to God and his fellow man is emphasized by King as "characterizing *all God's relations with men.*" This is seen, first, in Christ.

"It seems to determine His *whole method* with His generation and with His disciples. . . . There is to be no over-riding of the free personality anywhere. . . . He would replace all the attractive and seemingly rapid methods of the kingdom by bread, the kingdom by marvel, and the kingdom by force [Matt. iv: 1-11], with the slow and tedious and costly but reverent method of the spiritual kingdom . . . of God by God's way—of a trust freely won, a humility spontaneously arising, a love gladly given. He can take no pleasure in any kingdom but one of free persons. In the same way, in His dealings with the inner circle of His disciples, there seems to have been the most scrupulous regard for their own needed initiative. . . . The surpassingly significant fact, that Christ's chief work in the establishment of the kingdom of God, as seems to me beyond doubt, was His personal association with a few men; that, probably, a full third, perhaps more, of His very brief so-called public ministry was taken up with a period of definitely sought comparative retirement with the inner circle of the disciples—all this points to the same recognition of the fundamental importance in Christ's eyes of such a reverence for the person. The kingdom of God can be founded only by the full winning of free persons into His discipleship. . . . That glimpse which the Revelation gives us of Christ standing and knocking at the heart's closed door is a true picture forevermore not only of the attitude of Christ's earthly life, but of God's eternal relation to us. . . .

"Here, too, the impossibility of arbitrary divine decrees meets us. This would be treating a person as a thing, and God Himself may not do that and remain God. . . . A kingdom of free spirits cannot be merely decreed.

"In Providence, . . . God keeps His hands off. He must so act as to call out, not to suppress, individual initiative."

"And the same principle holds in our personal religious life. . . . [It is] necessary that God's relation to us should not be obtrusive. God must guard our freedom and our individuality. He must even take pains to hide His hand, as a strong, influential, but wise friend would do. . . . Even the judgment itself proceeds, no doubt, in clear recognition of the free personality. . . . The eternal hope is at least open." [24]

Here we must pause in our review of the work of Dr. King. It is sufficiently evident that we have been in the presence of a great theologian, certainly the greatest of the developing liberal movement. He has been the first in the New England succession to put the principle of love, presented in a new phrasing as "reverence for personality," into application to well-nigh the whole range of theology. It is not a new principle. Its application began with Edwards. It had variously affected the substance and form of doctrines from Hopkins down. It was the confessed principle of Park's system. But none of the New England writers had put it through. King had begun the work, and in these books are the evidences that he had carried it far. Much might have been expected of him, if he had continued to devote himself to theology. He might have done what Clarke had failed to do. His larger acquaintance with the whole field of history and of current thinking prepared him for what Clarke had been unable to do. And while he was himself sometimes unnecessarily conservative, he was essentially fearless and aggressive. But in 1902, shortly after the publication of *Theology and the Social Consciousness,* he was elected President of Oberlin College. Thereafter he was plunged into the details of administrative work, and, though he retained the professorship of theology, he added nothing to his previous volumes in further development of reconstruction. He was constantly called abroad as a favorite speaker on many occasions; as a lecturer, (especially on ethics); to take part in the World War; to make survey of Palestine with reference to the assignment of the mandate of that country; etc., etc. He wrote many things incidentally, works of great practical value and highly prized; but his work as a constructive theologian ceased. Had he carried on his work of reconstruction,

stated in connected form his conclusions on all the Christian doctrines, and perhaps pushed on into new fields, he would have undoubtedly done much to steady the line of advance, and to promote a more definite and less aimless discussion than that which actually followed.

These positions are the high points of the reconstructed theology which King anticipated at the time of writing this second theological book. They are Ritschlianism. In an address delivered five years earlier, of which the notes are preserved, he had said, "I am not a Ritschlian, but I believe that Ritschlians have much to teach us." Whether the further development of his system would have shown an enlarging agreement with Ritschl, or diverging lines of argument and a considerable disagreement, we cannot say. But Ritschlianism has here entered the liberal movement in America, no longer as the casual adoption of single ideas or the careless employment of half-understood phrases, but as the maturely considered incorporation of fundamental principles. In Germany, however, it was disappearing. In 1909 Duhm, who had been a pupil and follower of Ritschl, declared to the writer that there were no longer any Ritschlians there. Was this to be another case of the acceptance among us of an authority already repudiated at home?

Casting our glance now back upon the history already traced, if we ask what King actually contributed to the advancing movement, and what accordingly is his place in it, the answer must be put in something like the following form:

1. He had gained the confidence of his colleagues by his long teaching in Oberlin (1884—1897). This enabled him to go quietly on without disturbance. If some of these colleagues got the idea now and then that he was departing from the positions of his predecessors, they believed that such new positions must be right, because they felt that *he* was right.

2. He was conservative in respect to the practical bearings of his new ideas. He went on with prayer-meetings and Bible classes, as before. There could be nothing very wrong in such a man.

3. He was conciliatory in manner. He did not present the

new ideas in a disruptive way. They were always a new way of looking at the old truth.

4. These facts served to make it possible for him to go forward to positions really new. Still he pointed the way which would lead to positions still farther advanced, although he did not himself develop them.

5. He did actually keep the great elements of personal Christian experience.

6. His pupils felt in view of his teachings a great relief from certain difficulties and objectionable doctrines, and from the ontological elements of the old theology that give just offence.

7. Under him the college successfully passed through its first real trial of its declared principle of professorial freedom.

REFERENCES

1. See F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology,* p. 469 f.
2. Henry C. King, *Reconstruction in Theology,* Preface, p. v. Developed in Ch. XII.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 3.
4. *Ibid.,* p. 32.
5. *Ibid.,* p. 113.
6. See F. H. Foster, "The New Testament Miracles," *The American Journal of Theology,* 1908, p. 369 ff.
7. Henry C. King, *Reconstruction in Theology,* p. 242 f.
8. Lotze earnestly urged the present writer, when about to leave Göttingen for Leipzig, to remain there, saying that Ritschl was the only man in Germany who had anything to say upon theology fitted to the present day.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 248 f.
10. F. H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology,* p. 491. This position is implicit in both Park at Andover, and Fairchild, King's teacher, at Oberlin.
11. Washington Gladden, *Present Day Theology* (1913), p. 13.
12. Henry C. King, *Theology and the Social Consciousness,* p. 17.
13. *Ibid.,* p. 22.
14. *Ibid.,* p. 66 f.
15. Henry C. King, *Reconstruction in Theology,* p. 201 ff.
16. Henry C. King, *Theology and the Social Consciousness,* p. 130 ff. [The italics are Dr. Foster's.]
17. *Ibid.,* p. 136 ff.
18. Quoted from William James, *Psychology,* II, p. 579.
19. Henry C. King, *Theology and the Social Consciousness,* p. 145 ff.
20. *Ibid.,* p. 184 ff.
21. *Ibid.,* p. 188 ff.
22. *Ibid.,* p. 210 f.
23. *Ibid.,* p. 224 f.
24. *Ibid.,* p. 226 ff.

XI

THE RADICAL SCHOOL

OUR review of the history of the modern movement in theology has impressed upon us, I cannot doubt, as characteristic features, its conservatism, and its lack of logical thoroughness. Conservatism has its good side, for haste in adopting new conclusions in theology is as dangerous as rashness in military operations. Lack of thoroughness is less pardonable, although it may be excused to a degree in those who are surrendering so much as has been surrendered, and so much about which their deepest affections have gathered. But it was inevitable that there should arise men who were less hampered in their thought, had less occasion to fear the anticipated results in unsettling people and exposing the practical efforts of the Church at home and abroad to hazard, and whose vision of the excellence of the new should make the relinquishment of the less excellent old comparatively easy. And such men did appear.

These men, whom I shall call the Radical School, have a comparatively small representation in the literature of the times, but they are not therefore to be supposed few in number. There has been a long line of men who have silently gone over to the Unitarian body, or entered business, or, teaching, or have been found in chairs of philosophy in universities, whose original purpose it was to preach the Gospel. And orthodoxy has crushed many, and ruined their lives. Their history is drenched with tears and stained with their hearts' blood. The historian knows little about them, though the man who writes history may know much. And it may be further said, that they can be called a "school" only in the loosest sense. They derive from no common leader. They belong to no one religious denomination. They have little connection with one another. And they have had as yet little following which has openly

confessed indebtedness to them. They have sown seed which may some day be found to have borne fruit, and sharply differing from their times, they may be found ultimately to have been in advance of them. But, however all that may be, they are an element in the period and the movement with which we have concerned ourselves, and deserve our attention, as historical students, whether their influence shall be found ultimately to have been more or less. We have to deal here only with those who have committed their views to writing.

The first of these to present a radical and thoroughgoing program of theological renewal was Professor Levi L. Paine, of Bangor Seminary, where he had been Professor of Church History since 1871. He had written little during his work as a teacher, but in 1900 and 1901 he published two books, *The Evolution of Trinitarianism* and *The Ethnic Trinities*. They were his professional legacy to the Church, for in 1902 he died.

The former of these books begins its description of the evolution of the doctrine of the Trinity with the New Testament. There is no trinity in the Synoptic Gospels, but in them, and in the *Acts*, the first stratum is found in the messiahship of Christ. Then comes the additions to *Matthew* and *Luke* of the story of the miraculous conception of Jesus. Then Paul introduces from Greek philosophy the idea of Christ as a mediator. He developed no doctrine of a trinity, but he "conceived of Christ as superhuman and pre-existent, and as having a certain metaphysical relation to God." [1] He places Christ next to God in honour and power, and while remaining a monotheist takes a long step towards a doctrine of the Trinity. The Fourth Gospel (the date of which is put about the middle of the second century) brings forward the Logos doctrine, which is not of Jewish, but of Greek origin. It follows Paul's Christology, with this addition, "God is always the Father. Christ is the mediator sent of God, subordinate and dependent." [2] After Origen, with his doctrine of eternal generation of the Son, came Arius and then Athanasius, who taught that the Son was a generated, and, therefore, a derived being, and hence not self-

existent. This last quality belongs to the Father only, who is the fountain of deity. The Son is, therefore, a different *person* from the Father (and from the Spirit), but of the same essence. The Athanasian and the Nicene Trinity is, therefore, one God, the Father, and two divine but dependent beings, the Son and the Spirit, whose unity is not numerical, but a unity of essence. Augustine, who knew no Greek, did not understand the Nicene doctrine, and, while supposing himself to agree with it, took his start with the numerical unity of the Trinity, and then asked, What are these three? He styled them "three somewhats," [3] refusing to use the terms "hypostases" or "persons." And thus he really passed over to Sabellianism, "one God in three modes of manifestation," and his monotheism became a monistic pantheism. This came down into New England Congregationalism, with its "three distinctions" (Stuart).

None of my readers who are not pretty well trained in Church history, I am sure, can have followed me in this very rapid review of Paine's argument. But they will have gained the impression which I have designed to make upon them, before passing to a summary in my own words of his positions, the impression, namely, of the method of this Church historian, by which he invalidates, in his own mind, the whole old New England orthodoxy. It is intentionally historical, and in the main actually so. His quite elaborate discussion of Trinity, Christology and Atonement, carried on in this and the succeeding book, results in showing how confused, self-contradictory, and self-refuting the whole structure of the old theology is. He intersperses his discussion with biting criticism of such other thinkers as Lyman Abbott, Phillips Brooks, Dean Alford, Fairbairn, Samuel Harris, Schleiermacher, and George A. Gordon, in many cases transgressing, in his zeal, the limits of ordinary courtesy. Gordon remarks: "The deepest objection to Professor Paine's book . . . is that he regards his subject so much as a field for dialectical sport, and that, so far as I now recall, he does not devote a single page to the meaning of the doctrine." [4]

At this point the present writer became again involved in the

controversy. As I shall have occasion to refer to him somewhat at length in the following pages, I shall, both to avoid repetition of the personal pronoun, and in a strenuous effort to be objective in my handling of his effusions, call him simply "Foster." At this time, Foster was Professor of Systematic Theology in the Pacific Seminary, California. He was still an adherent of the New England Theology, so-called, and was, as might be expected, greatly disturbed by the issuing of such books as these from a Congregational seminary. He knew what kind of examinations candidates for the ministry were formerly accustomed to receive on their ordination, and what refusals some had experienced when they had failed to satisfy their examiners. He had not learned how decisively the Merriam council of 1877 had been over-ruled by subsequent councils, or how completely the general confusion of theological thinking had changed the basis of ordination and ministerial standing among Congregationalists. He, accordingly, declared that Paine had passed beyond the limits of theological freedom, and that the toleration of such men in the ministry involved the greatest peril to the churches. And he urged upon the ministry at large that in all ordaining councils they should "vote according to their theological convictions." The humour of the situation lay, as in Foster's original contest with Whiton, in the fact that his contention was altogether aside from the mark. A great majority of our ministers had come to the time when they hadn't any "convictions." [5] The era of confusion was fully upon us, and another decade was to see Foster himself swept by it from his moorings.

If, however, we abstain now from following Paine's minute, and very repetitious development of his argument, his indictment of the theology of his day may be summarized somewhat as follows.

The historical argument, as already noted, consists in showing how various doctrines have been founded upon premises which in these days we have found to be entirely untenable, and in exhibiting how the successive forms which they have assumed contradict one another. New truth, however, does not

merely replace the old by the better, but it opens out vast areas of truth hithorto unanticipated. Thus evolution, as it has been better and better understood, has created an entirely new philosophy of both history and natural science, and hence revolutionized all thinking, including theological thinking. To this principle, which most of us are ready to accept at once, Paine is consistently true. He therefore rejects all miracles as unhistorical. I have not noted that he anywhere dwells on the fact that the Bible was written in credulous ages, as rendering all such accounts suspicious at first sight. But there is none of the temporizing at this point which we have noted in his predecessors.

He chose the doctrine of the Trinity for his chief attack, in consequence, no doubt of his familiarity with this ground through his long historical studies. But he extended his treatment to embrace nearly all of what I may call the ontological doctrines of the historical systems, Christology and the Atonement in particular. His doctrine of the person of Christ is simply that He was a man—not "a mere man," or an ordinary man, but a man of such character and personality as made Him truly a revelation of God. And His death, while not a "sacrifice" in the Jewish sense at all, nor in any sense reconciling God to men, for He needed no reconciliation, was the means of reconciling men to God. I subjoin an extract from Paine's chapter on this subject:

"What makes that death so supremely impressive is the manner in which it was brought about. The crucifixion on Calvary was the tragic end of a career that has moved the world's heart by its complete devotion to others and to the truth of God, and by the new gospel of divine love that was proclaimed to men, so that as we gaze upon the Cross of martyrdom, we are compelled to say: 'No man ever lived or died like this man.' The spectacle of such a life and death draws on human sympathy and love and gratitude as nothing else can. It is indeed what Paul declared it to be, 'the power of God unto salvation.' But change the picture, and substitute for it the picture of orthodox tradition, viz., of a divine propitiation offered to God in the guise of a human sacrificial death, and how irresistibly are we carried back to the rude and superstitious materi-

alism of the ancient world, from which mankind has been slowly rising through these long centuries. . . . At-one-ment and mediation are moral events. They belong to the realm of spiritual realities, not to the order of material things. Blood-shedding and death cannot in themselves have any moral meaning. It was Christ's spirit of sacrifice, His gift of Himself, that made His death on the Cross an event of the highest moral significance. . . . Nor did the power of that life end with His death. . . . His at-one-ment and mediation in their most blessed forms are going on still in the persons of His true disciples of every age, in whom His spirit is exhibited, and from whom it flows as a life-giving stream into humanity." [6]

The materials of the new theology are to be found, according to Paine, in nature, history, the Bible, and the Church. The history of the human race, he says,

"becomes as if an enlarged moral consciousness, in which, as in a glass, every faculty and aspect of man's moral life is displayed in every possible form of human working and development. . . . But there is one unique illustration of moral consciousness in history that bespeaks our special attention. I mean that of Jesus Christ, as being the loftiest and divinest form of such consciousness that has yet been seen among men. . . . The first thing to be noted is that it was a completely human one. . . . There is nothing in the . . . Synoptic Gospels . . . to indicate that He ever rose into any form of religious consciousness that was superhuman or unnatural. Everywhere and always He was a man speaking to brother men. In His highest and sublimest flights of thought He never lost sight of His real humanity. . . . But, secondly, it is clear that Christ's consciousness was eminent in its whole religious movement above all who were around Him. . . . There is a third feature of Christ's moral consciousness that is perhaps the most wonderful of all,—the clear and steady sense He had from first to last of its limitations. [He] confined His teaching . . . closely to purely religious themes. . . . In all matters of earthly science and learning, Christ was no authority, and never claimed to be. Only in the region of man's moral nature did He speak 'as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' But in that realm His words come with the same authority to-day, because they were spoken out of a consciousness of intimate relationship with God and His kingdom of moral truth that is still unrivalled, in its heavenly intuitions, among men." [7]

I need only to add, in regard to these materials of theology, that Paine's position with regard to the Bible is that its importance lies not only in the record it gives of the teachings of Jesus, but in its service as an interpreter of the moral consciousness of the race.

Paine also faces the present day, and does it with his fearless and uncompromising frankness. He looks out upon the world and considers Christianity as a world religion. He makes one very important suggestion, which in these days is having a hearing such as the Church did not give in his day, viz., that the way of approach to the missionary problem "is not by dogmatic authority," for, if we try to force our creeds upon Hindoos or Moslems, they "will unflinchingly hold their ground against the Christian missionary who is trying to convert them." And he closes his discussion thus:—

"Let Christianity, laying aside its exploded traditions and creeds that were the product of ages of Christian decline and darkness, write on its banners Christ's parable of the prodigal son, and Paul's chapter on knowledge *versus* love, with its truly trinitarian close, 'but now abideth *faith, hope, love,* these three, and the *greatest of these is love,*' and the triumph of Christianity as the world's religion will be only a question of time." [8]

Paine then passes to his final chapters. One is on the "unreadiness of Christendom" for its problems, which he traces to the fact that "moral leadership among us no longer depends upon church membership." [9] Two more discuss "perils of organized Christianity," that from ignorance and that from insincerity. Upon neither of these does he use conventional forms of indirection. What is demanded is "a campaign of education." This should enter the instruction of the Sunday schools. "Better no study at all than a study along the old lines of theological instruction." He enters upon a rather long discussion of the various positions which have been held in the Church regarding the *officiosum mendacium,* but he comes down with emphasis to the insincerities of the present day. He says:

"What is the most startling fact in the present theological situation? Is it not that our Church leaders throughout Christendom have been hiding themselves behind theological makeshifts of every kind, setting forth new truth under old labels, or old truth under new ones, filling old bottles with new wine or new bottles with old ingredients, so that hearers are mystified and left in complete theological confusion? Let me give a single illustration from my own personal observation. Some years since I fell into a conversation with a minister of my acquaintance on the subject of Christ's miraculous birth. He told me of his troubles over it, and of the way he took to solve them. He went to a friend who stood in high moral as well as literary repute, and put the question to him, whether he believed that Jesus was born in a miraculous way. The reply came quickly and sharply: 'Impossible! Impossible! I cannot believe it.' This answer from a man for whose moral consciousness the minister had the greatest respect seems to have ended his dilemma. He had made his appeal to the practical, intelligent, common sense of a highly respected man of the world, and the answer he received seemed to have settled the question for him completely and finally. Yet years after this occurrence my ministerial acquaintance was reciting the Apostles' Creed in his church services every Sunday, in which are the words: 'Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.' I do not give this case as if it were remarkable. No doubt it is being repeated in the history of not a few pastors and churches. . . . Will not the strictest moralist declare that no better example could be given of a low moral sense of what the law of Christian veracity demands?" [10]

I quote a final passage:

"It is not difficult also to forecast what the essential feature of the new theology will be. Man and Nature together will constitute its fundamental material, and as man is nature's crown, he will naturally be the foremost subject of religious interest. Besides, man's own moral consciousness is the focus-point through which all the moral light of the universe in every form of revelation must pass. The seat of moral authority for every man is in his own moral nature. It becomes, therefore, the highest moral duty of every man to study himself, and in the light of that psychological survey, to test and gauge his moral responsibility. All the spiritual knowledge of which man is capable must reach him through his

own moral faculties, so that its real character will be truly discoverable only as it takes on the forms of the moral consciousness. God can be known only as His image is shadowed in man's own moral nature. Whether God and man are of one common image and likeness or not, man cannot help conceiving of God in that way. If God is not a moral and personal being, He is to man 'an unknown God.' Hence theology is destined to be essentially *an anthropology;* and psychology, or the study of man's higher nature, will form with natural science the twin 'master lights' of theological truth,—historical criticism assisting them by its methods of eliminating possible error and by shedding the further light of universal human experience upon man's individual path." [11]

The next great writer of the radical school was George Burman Foster, who published in 1906 a remarkable book, entitled *The Finality of the Christian Religion.* He was then Professor of the Philosophy of Religion in the University of Chicago, having been just transferred from the professorship of Systematic Theology in the Divinity School of that University. He was born in Alderson, West Virginia, in 1858, graduated from the Rochester Theological Seminary, where he studied with Professor A. H. Strong, a very original although orthodox teacher, spent a year at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin, and became professor in Chicago in 1895. His volume was to be followed by another, of a more constructive cast, which was, however, never issued. He died in 1918.

The Finality of the Christian Religion is a work of extensive and careful scholarship. Professor Foster disclaims for it "originality, in the strict sense of the word," but says that "the thoughts which are not his by creation are yet his by patient reflection in the course of wide study in philosophy and theology." [12] With all its boldness of discussion and inference, the book is marked by great personal modesty. In a large measure, Professor Foster is a student and investigator co-operating with his readers, rather than a dogmatic propounder of favourite propositions. Like Paine, with whose books he does not seem to have been acquainted, the discussion is grounded in history.

Its thesis is variously stated, perhaps in the best form as follows: "To defend against supernaturalism the ideal of *understanding and explaining* reality which science requires, and against naturalism the ideal of *meaning and worth* which are the kernel of the religious interest—this is at once the task and the salvation of the modern man." [13] Or briefly: "Religion without supernaturalism, science without naturalism—that is our thesis." [14] And the underlying "presupposition of the specific contention of this whole book" is "that there is in nature a principle of spontaneity, of new beginnings, of underivability, as well as a principle of habit, of order, or of mechanical equivalence." [15] Or again: "The gist of our contention is that the rights of personality are not fully recognized by either supernaturalism or naturalism." [16] And the whole discussion is thus summarized by him:

"After a chapter containing the history of thought on the subject, the discussion is divided into two parts: 'Authority-Religion (Supernaturalism) and Naturalism' and 'The Finality of Christianity and the Idea of Development.' In the first part the rise, development, and disintegration of Christianity as authority-religion are traced; also, the history and critique of naturalism are summarized. In the second part the constructive task is attacked. To this end the respective merits of the dogmatic and the religio-historical methods are examined. Finally, in the light of the mystery and underivability of personality, on the one hand, and of evolution, on the other, the problem of the book is discussed [*viz.*, the Finality of the Christian religion]." [17]

I have been thus minute in setting forth the most general features of the book in order that its general plan and the thoroughness with which that plan is carried out might be made plain. It is, of course, impossible to go into the details of the discussion at this time and place. It is, in fact, something like an African jungle, in the thickness of its growth and at times its pathlessness. Suffice it to say that the author intends to present every phase of every topic discussed by any significant author, and that he accomplishes this purpose in a very large degree. I must content myself with giving the results at which he arrives as fully as possible.

Professor Foster begins with a review of the history of the successive attempts from the beginning to exhibit Christianity, in its ecclesiastiform as the one true and permanent religion of all time. Passing then to 'Authority-Religion,' he takes up the doctrine of Scripture, since this is the source of religious authority. The "doctrine of inspiration rests ultimately upon the *testimonium spiritus sancti internum*," [18] but his attack is principally historical. We have here a summary of the principal points of the higher criticism of the Bible which are now generally accepted by scholars. He does not fail also to show the rational side of the argument, and sketches, among other things, the retreat which orthodoxy has made under the influence of critical studies.

"Verbal inspiration was first limited to sayings introduced as 'Word of God'; then completely given up; inspiration was next conceived as a positive divine guidance in the writing-down of what was supernaturally revealed; then it was changed to a mere negative protection from error; then, next, the inerrancy of the Scripture itself was surrendered bit by bit—limited at first to the redemptively necessary doctrines, then to their essentially religious content; finally, the personal inerrancy of the Biblical authors was reduced to the inerrancy of Jesus, and that of the latter, again, limited to the region of religious truth." [19]

And he summarizes the whole in the expression, " 'Inspiration' of the Book is untrue historically and impossible psychologically." This statement is followed by a historical review of the history of the canon and related topics.

Professor Foster then passes to the subject of miracles. He gives us the first candid and thorough treatment of the subject which is to be found among all the writers of this period of history. He does not dispute the existence of some foundation in fact for the accounts of healing of the sick by Jesus; [20] but he does entirely and conclusively deny all miracles consisting in the rupture of the laws of nature. After all the mystification and incomprehensible ambiguity of his predecessors, his treatment is as refreshing as a breeze on an August day. I summarize it briefly.

Spinoza was wrong in dogmatically affirming the impossibility of miracles, but it is equally wrong to declare dogmatically that they are possible. Hume was right in declaring that no tradition for them can be believed when we consider that no observer in Biblical times possessed the knowledge and the scientific accuracy to pronounce upon such matters. "The natural order is not distinct from the divine activity, does not run a separate course, is not something by itself. Each must be the same in principle. . . . We may not suppose that there is a twofold activity in God, a natural and a supernatural. . . . Christianity is not miraculous stories—no matter how many nor how miraculous they may be—but the Spirit of Christ." [21]

Theologians have sometimes declared that all other miracles might be relinquished, but that the miracle of the Resurrection cannot be. Paul writes, "If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins." To surrender the Resurrection is, therefore, to surrender Christianity. But Professor Foster does not admit this. He withdraws from the position that the experience of the Christian does not depend upon the Resurrection. "Is there no other foundation of salvation?" he asks. "Are not the truths of our faith, God's love and grace, His commandments and kingdom, reliable in and of themselves? Do they need a visible authentication? Are we not children of God if we say with love and confidence, Abba, Father? Do we not have forgiveness of our sins if we are penitent and believingly seek his grace? Is Jesus not our Reconciler if His Spirit dwells in us and fills us with the peace of God?" And a little below he adds:

"The acknowledgment of a single historical fact is a thing of knowledge and not of faith. Faith—let this not be forgotten—is directed only to that which is of a timeless character, which can disclose itself as immediately present to anyone anywhere. Whoever substitutes an historical fact for such object of faith externalizes faith, holds religion down to a stage which has been overcome in the world-historical movement, and complicates religion in insoluble contradiction with all the rest of our life." [22]

In discussing the "changed view of the world," Professor Foster lays emphasis, in contrast with the substance-dissolving theories of certain schools, upon personality. It may be that he was influenced by King, for in one place he parallels King's peculiar and favorite expression, "reverence for personality." [23] Most of what he says on the new view of the world need not detain us, since it is familiar to every one. But his view of personality is a turning point in the whole argument. It is a primal fact of consciousness, and any theory which destroys it, thereby destroys itself. Christianity can be final, if it is a religion of ideals, but there can be no ideals if there be no personalities.

"If it be the will to which centrality and supremacy belong in the human spirit, then the primary evil is not an error of the intellect, but the evil state of the heart. And what must be set right is not directly a set of ideas, but the bent of the will. The agency to be employed is not now 'sound doctrine,' so much as sound personalities. As fire kindles fire, and not some theory about the nature of flame, so persons save persons. Thus revelation is the content of holy personalities whose base and roots are God, not of sacred doctrines. We are saved not by ideas but by ideals. Thus, too, the revelation which Jesus brought is Himself; and Kant was right when he said that there was nothing good in the world save a good will alone." [24] "The primacy of the will in man; the practical-moral life the highest life; character the chief good; ideals the essence of the Christian religion and the content of revelation, which latter is the history of great souls, and the soul of history; ideals valued teleologically and not causally; faith not assent but moral action; the finality of the Christian religion in its ideals—this, too, is all of a piece, and fits into the modern dynamic and biological world." [25]

"So Jesus finally corrected Pilate by saying, *not,* 'He that heareth my voice is of the truth,' . . . *but,* 'He that is of the *truth,* heareth my voice.' And what does *that* mean? It is, indeed, a kingdom of . . . truth that Jesus rules over. But it is not unpersonal, scientific truth of which Jesus was thinking. Jesus was no man of science. He founded no academy, walked in no porch, gathered about Him . . . no scholars, strictly speaking, that they might learn the wisdom of the world from Him. *But Jesus was a man of life, King in the kingdom of life,* and those He gathered about Him He taught the *art*

of life—a life which was not of this world, which made *different men* out of them from what they were before. He was not King in the kingdom of concepts; He was King *in the kingdom of the ideal;* and He would conquer, not by the might of force, physical or intellectual—militarism, mechanism . . ., the compulsion of logic or of oratory! Poor Pilate did not understand this, as the multitude today do not understand it, because—because they are not *of the truth;* have no inner kinship, no bent to the truth. Pilate, with sigh or scorn, and with the satiety of a cultivated Roman, familiar with truth over which philosophers debated, asked: 'What is truth?' '*I* am truth,' says Jesus. Truth is *personal.* And so Christ and conscience are continuous. We are saved by ideals, their dynamic and their temptation. It is because Jesus is like us that He can fasten on to our lives. It is because He is greater than we are that He bows us down in repentance and builds us up in faith." [26]

We have now gained, I hope, something of an understanding of the method and general results of Professor Foster's study. We may dispatch the remainder of the work more rapidly. To the Trinity, in contrast with Paine, he gives no distinct treatment. Enough that with his doctrine of Christ both that doctrine and the Atonement disappear without further refutation. Into anthropology—the doctrine of sin—and aspects of the divine action—election, etc.,—he does not go. We need, however, to be somewhat detailed in our view of his more specific treatment of Jesus.

Regarding the question of the actual existence of Jesus, he subordinates the historian's exposition of it to the worth of Jesus.

"We are more certain that Jesus existed than historical science can make us be, and we are more certain because our religious apprehension of the glory of His inner life reacts upon our study of the outer biography, inducing an historical certainty in excess of the competency of science to engender. The author is convinced that an interrogation of the consciousness of Christians will verify his position that they pass from their value-judgment to their existence-judgment, from their conviction of the worth of Jesus to their conviction that He is an historical character." [27]

Nevertheless, he proceeds next to a careful consideration of

the sources of the life of Jesus. He follows the general results of the general co-operative study of scholars. It is not necessary to rehearse what he says regarding the Synoptics. The Fourth Gospel may receive the more attention because of the persistent efforts of scholars otherwise belonging to the liberal movement to maintain its apostolic origin. Professor Foster notes the difference of the picture of the synoptics from that of the Fourth Gospel, and the wholly different character of Jesus' discourses. Jesus was such a one as the Synoptics delineate and not the one whom John paints. The Fourth Gospel is, therefore, excluded from the sources of Jesus' life. This is the more necessary since the date of that Gospel is to be placed at about 150 A. D.

After the elaborate discussion of these matters, our author sums up what he has to say about Jesus in a final chapter. I summarize this, principally in his own words.

1. As a child of His time, Jesus held the popular view of the world and heaven, of demons and angels. Somewhat inconsistently, Professor Foster hints at some sort of a belief on Jesus' part in miracles. He expected the immediate advent of the kingdom of God. He probably considered Himself in some sense the Messiah, but He never thought of ascribing a pre-mundane existence to Himself. Jesus, then, did not live in our world. Can we adjust Him to this world? Are His precepts and practices consistent with the accredited modern ethical principles? Professor Foster replies: [28] (1) Love, or the will directed to the fellowship of autonomous beings, is the disposition of which Jesus is the archetype, and which is alone good. (2) The words of Jesus receive their peculiar tone from their being directed to an eternal goal, on account of which all that intervenes can be only relatively and limitedly willed. But (3) His words are not laws which ought to be fulfilled under all circumstances. (4) We follow Jesus, not when we obey His words, but when we are likeminded with Him and, therefore, autonomously seek the path to that eternal goal. (5) His words are, therefore, by no means worthless: they are the glorious witness of inner freedom and power. (6)

Integral in the thought of Jesus, and inalienable in the Christian religion, is the principle that the goods of civilized life—family, vocation, state, science and the like—are only relative values. Only persons have absolute value. To walk in the light of the Eternal and before the face of God, undisturbed by divisive and bewildering impulses in the world enmeshed in sensible goods and interests—this is the heart of genuine Christianity.

What, then, was there *new* in Jesus? *He* was new, and *His* power to make men new was new likewise. What was certainly new was the disposition and self-consciousness of Jesus. His was a value-judgment that was new also, viz., that not *things,* not even *sacred* things, but that *persons only* are worthful. Faith in the infinite worth of the human personality in the sight of God—if there was anything new in the thought of Jesus, it was this.

Much more might be said about the results of this theologian; but what he actually did in the onward movement of modern liberalism is, perhaps, now sufficiently described. To some he may seem like Samson in his crowning exploit at Gaza. The temple of theology is full of theologians, and the greatest among them are there. But Samson has seized upon the two pillars of Biblical interpretation and philosophy and has bowed himself and brought the whole edifice of ecclesiastical doctrine crashing down in one destructive ruin. Fortunate is he if he has escaped the fate of the rest.

But he has escaped. Discarding the temporary, partial, and erroneous more consistently and thoroughly than all others, he has yet preserved the essentials of Christian experience, repentance, faith, and salvation, and the supreme figure of Jesus who in His own person revealed God to men, and by what He was, drew men unto the restored fellowship of the heavenly Father. Dying while still in his prime, he left his work, like King, unfinished. Had he been able to add that promised volume of construction, he might have done what King also failed to do, and written the system which would have steadied the tumultuous discussions of later years, on the guiding prin-

ciple of the worth of personality. But what he did had its place and did its work. The power of Professor Foster did not consist in the newness of his arguments, for they were not unknown to every competent scholar. He added, doubtless, many illuminating suggestions, and set forth many positions with new force. But the assemblage of so many arguments, and their massing and extended presentation, produced in many readers an overwhelming effect. An equally thorough and scholarly system would have been a gift to the Church of inestimable and enduring value.

The practical effect of Professor G. B. Foster's book on some of its readers may be seen by the reception with which it met from another Foster, not at all related to Professor George. His first impressions of the work, as evidenced by the comments and interlineations in his copy, now in the library at Oberlin, were decidedly unfavourable. He did not find much in the book in the way of argument with which he was not entirely familiar, except certain personal touches given by its author to the discussion. But it made an impression on him, and he gradually came to feel that it was incumbent on him to give the whole system of theology a new and thorough examination in the light of the persistent objections of modern scholarship, to give the purely rational explanation of Christianity, as he said, "a fair chance."

He began at the miracles, and at the supposition that these are essential to revelation, which was the position on which their defence had been made, and which was one of the chief presuppositions of the theology which he had been taught. He turned to the New Testament to see whether the miracles there recorded had ever had any value or application as proofs of its revelations, according to what the New Testament had to show; and he concluded that they had not. No one ever stands up and certifies to the divine message of Jesus, declaring that he had heard the angel choirs at Jesus' birth. All the miracles are most astonishingly ineffective. Even the Resurrection itself, which is called by apologists the one great

miracle, with which Christianity stands or falls, had no such decisive effect as has been ascribed to it. In an elaborate article on this subject in *The American Journal of Theology,* he closed his discussion with the following paragraph:

"The fact is—and we are not likely to give it too much emphasis—the whole attitude of the modern apologete is foreign to that of the apostles and to the New Testament. The modern apologist appreciates what a miracle really would be—the writers of the New Testament did not; he sees what a tremendous, decisive, and permanent effect it ought to have—they viewed it as a transient wonder; to him, it must have clear outlines, inner harmony, logical consistency, and innate dignity—to them it needed none of these things. Hence no one can tell what their view of the nature of the Resurrection body of Christ was, nor have they so narrated Jesus' appearances as to remove them clearly from the category of the purely subjective and imaginary. In fact, many Christians who are now trying to hold on to the idea of the Resurrection, are explaining it in such a way as to leave little to it except a *conviction somehow gained that Jesus still lived!* And thus there disappears from the narrative all substantial evidence that there was any effect of the Resurrection at all such as the modern exegete and apologist demands to fulfil the requirements of our argument and afford a real and effective attestation of the message of Jesus, by which men might be brought to a real belief in Him." [29]

On this basis Foster proceeded to an examination of the whole system of theology, by which he was led to an entire reconstruction of his beliefs. He was prepared for the quick accomplishment of this task, for he had been teaching the history of doctrine and the system of theology for eighteen years. And, while he passed, according to his own statement, "to the purely non-supernatural or rationalistic standpoint," [30] this did not mean to him the abandonment of the theology of Christian experience. He had been engaged on this from the days of his study in Germany, where he had come into agreement with the general position of Frank,[31] represented in America by Professor Stearns of Bangor. He had given the Stone Lectures at Princeton in 1900 on the contribution of Christian experience to the system of evangelical doctrine, and had made this

a chief element in the teaching of systematic theology. What he came to may be seen, in part, from other articles in the same journal. One on "The Theology of the New Rationalism" (1909) defines rationalism as "that form of theology which seeks to perform the theological task of our day—the readjustment of Christian thinking to the demands of modern thought—by national processes alone." Separate sentences from this article will sufficiently indicate its drift.

"The doctrines which precede, in the order of logical development, the doctrine of the Scriptures, will meet with no modification which can be charged to rationalism as such. This portion of theology is, of course, entirely rational in every true system. . . . What may be called the psychological doctrines . . . are not essentially affected [sin, repentance, conversion, forgiveness]. . . . The eschatological doctrines will undergo less modification than might be expected. . . . What *is* changed is . . . the scaffolding of the system [Trinity, Incarnation, person and work of Christ]." And the article closes with the paragraph: "Modern rationalism, however it may differ from 'historic' Christianity, is Christian, as building its life and its theology upon the fact and idea of communion with God first taught and realized in perfection by Jesus Christ, and as following this unique teacher as its Master and Example. Whatever changes it may have made, or may still make, it believes them all demanded by the call for *proof*, which is the call for *truth* in theology and *reality* in life." [32]

A later article (1911) on "Theological Obscurantism" sharpens the issue between the old and the new:

"It is not what the evangelical system *is*, but whether it is *true*. . . . It is not what the Bible teaches, but whether it possesses authority to control opinions. . . . It is not what may be regarded as a probable or a pleasant result of speculation, but what has some degree of rigid proof. . . . It is not what it is impossible to deny, but what it is necessary to affirm." [33]

The article is then devoted to a severe review of Forsyth's *Person and Place of Jesus Christ*. It closes with the following paragraphs:

"Perhaps ere we leave this book, there ought to be a plain answer given to a certain question which it puts: 'You say that the one legacy of Jesus was a doctrine of the Father, reinforced by the pow-

erful personality of the prophet. *Why* do you say that? What entitles you to say that the great thing Jesus brought the world was a doctrine, a doctrine rather than a deed, and that He left as His achievement His principle rather than His person? You admit that it was not the view of the apostles, nor of the first church; it was not the view of those who received whatever legacy He did leave. You are coming to admit that it was not the view of the Synoptists. Why do you say they were all of them wrong?'

"Shall we put the answer as bluntly at a modernist, out of his deep earnestness and out of the sadness of a controversy troubled by the methods of obscurantism, would be likely to put it? He might say: 'Because I know that Jesus was a man and a prophet. But the idea that He was more, that He was qualified to make His person the object of His doctrine by His possession of a divine nature, I see no shred of a reason for accepting. It is suggested by writings that were written long after His death, by persons who never saw Him, upon reports coming to them by unknown channels, which are full of stories to which I can give no credence, and which base their attempts to prove their various positions as to His person by misquotations and bad exegesis of Old Testament passages. It is a doctrine which detracts from the fatherhood of God, since it makes Him unwilling or unable to forgive except when bought off in some unexplainable way. I trace it all to a man who never saw Christ, who quarreled with the earliest apostles, upon his own testimony, as to certain fundamental ideas of the system, and whose personal capacity to testify to so great a doctrine as this theory of the supernatural being and nature of Christ is questionable. I say that 'they were all of them wrong' because *not a particle of proof is advanced to show that they were right* which deserves the attention of a sober man.' " [34]

In 1910 and 1911 there appeared in the same journal a symposium on Christology in which Professor Warfield had written on the conservative position, Professor William Adams Brown on the mediating views, and Foster was invited to represent the radical side. He responded in an article which appeared in 1911.

The article to a large extent traverses the usual line of such objectors to the Church Christology, saying that it is not proved, that the age in which the records were written was

an age that accepted miracles with complete credulity so that its testimony to alleged facts is worthless, that critical studies of the New Testament, the study of comparative religion, and of the history of doctrine strengthens the verdict against it. Foster then passed to the question whether Jesus was an historical person. He makes by way of introduction the remark that it makes very little difference to the modern thinker whether He was or not.

"No system of truth which shall dominate the soul and claim authority over the conduct of man can rest upon the reality of any historical personality. Salvation cannot be something 'objectively' secured by the work of a historical person, as is supposed in current views of the Atonement, because it is the inner state of the soul, the condition of harmony and communion with God, Truth cannot be something which depends upon the existence of the person who first spoke it to the world, because it is truth only as it shines to the mind by its own light. If these current views were correct, then a historical personage would be necessary for the existence of the Christian religion, and Christianity would be exposed to every breath of criticism which should assail the Gospels as the original authorities for the life of Christ. Truth must be placed above such dangers as those which would arise to it under this method of conceiving it. Though Jesus should be proved never to have existed, the truth which has come down to us, and which we have received because of its own self-evidencing value and which we have found to work out such great results in the liberation of our spirits from the thraldom of sin and the establishment of holy relations with the Heavenly Father, would still be true, and its effects would remain unaltered. In this sense a historical Christ is unnecessary." [35]

Still, on the basis of recent studies, especially on the unshaken testimony of the Epistles of Paul, Foster accepts historical reality of Jesus. Passing to the construction of His personality, our author says:

"Definite knowledge of the life of Jesus may be absolutely wanting, but there is a general impression which may be arrived at. . . . A picture of Jesus is attainable by us which is one of wondrous sweetness and attractiveness, the sweetest and most attractive in the world. It is that of a lowly teacher, of the common people in origin

and hence delivered from that pride of wealth and birth which seems effectually to close the channels of human sympathy, . . . a good man in His own inner life, . . . [who] began His ministry by works of kindness . . . sought the individual religious good of every soul He met . . . proclaimed the way of salvation . . . encountered the increasing opposition of an external and organized church . . . gathered . . . disciples . . . preached to great multitudes . . . taught the life of prayer . . . through perseverance in His work . . . met His death. More personal traits are not altogether lacking to this picture, though they may be less certain historically. His beautiful face, His winning manner, His compelling persuasiveness, His inoffensiveness and His personal self-effacement, His interest in His friends, His capacity of scorn and anger (but not for Himself), His dialectic skill, His personal aloofness from sin combined with His charity for the sinner, His unwearied pursuit of His daily labors, His sadness over the world, His consolation in the presence of God—these things appear in the watermarks of the history, and are scarcely to be neglected." [36]

In a similar way, Foster treats the sinlessness of Jesus, which he accepts. He adds:—

"The benefit which the conception of the sinlessness of Jesus confers on us is that of a realized ideal. An ideal of sinlessness would not be without its value, considered as a standard and a goal toward which we could direct our efforts. But a realized ideal has the further element of encouragement. To believe that a man has once attained sinlessness is of great comfort in the actual struggle of life. We can believe in the prevalence of holy purpose in the lives of many men. It is our hope for the increasing righteousness of the world. But we do not find this purpose uninterrupted, as it should be, in the men we have to do with in real life, or in our own personal experience. It was uninterrupted once! It may have been often again. It shall be in me! Such is the argument of faith and hope; and the result is an enlargement of actual attainment." [37]

Foster also dwells on the complete acquaintance of Jesus with God; His perfection as the ideal teacher, possessing the authority which we always ascribe to experts; His perfect example; His ideal presence with us now. Of this last particular, he writes:

"In the Fourth Gospel we read: 'It is expedient that I go away. . . . The Comforter will come to you.' The present Christ is, literally, the personal presence of God with the soul. The teachings of Christ still remain the material of instruction which the soul uses and God uses with the soul, and hence it is that the Comforter 'receives' of Christ's words and 'shows' them unto the believer. Thus Christ has His *real* present place in the experience of the Christian. . . . Thus we have come to the point where we can recognize the entire and unqualified goodness of God, and can now ascribe directly to the Father all those merciful and gracious traits which have attracted us so powerfully to Christ. The idea of God thus emerges for the modern thinker from the darkness of the ages of dread and becomes what Jesus Himself taught, that of a Father, possessed of all the tenderness of the best earthly father, and infinitely more. And thus the worship of Christ merges in the worship of the Father and His presence with us is now understood as the true presence of the Father, communing directly, as an Infinite Spirit can, with our spirits, and thus establishing a personal contact between the infinite and the finite person. Thus the rational Christology becomes *a Christology of values.*" [38]

In one more article in this journal,[39] Foster presented the idea of God as essentially a Becoming, a progressive being in opposition to the static idea, as involved in Bergson's treatment of the Vital Impulse in his *Creative Evolution.* He advanced two ideas as possibly valuable in this connection, Wundt's idea that it is a law of the universe that spiritual energy tends to increase, and the idea that it is as easy to conceive of God as increasing, as it is to conceive Him merely as existing. In either case we simply take Him as he is, and leave that existence or that increase as equally unaccounted for.

It will be seen from these extracts, I believe, that Foster belongs in the Radical School; and from his treatment of these themes that, like Paine and G. B. Foster, he does not intend to abandon Christian experience. In fact, this experience has a remarkable identity throughout Christian history. The elimination from Christian thinking of the accumulated errors of former ages should serve to eliminate also elements of con-

fusion, and set forth in a truer light what Christian experience really teaches. The experience of a man is his real religion, and, since theology is the attempt to explain and justify that religion, its subject matter is Christian experience. Foster's earlier and later studies had confirmed him finally in this conviction. Thoroughgoing radicalism will, therefore, clear the way for a better understanding of what Christianity is, and for a greater display of its spiritual power than has ever been known, since by its prevalence, theology must become *the explanation of Christian experience.*

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XII

CONCLUSION

GLANCING back over the course of the movement, so far as we have been able to follow it in these pages, what do we see? How does it on the whole impress us? What estimate must we put upon it? And what have we to learn from it? These questions it will be difficult to answer. Recognizing the difficulties of the task, we must, however, undertake it.

Liberalism has been recently proclaimed somewhat loudly to be a failure. The most prominent leader of religious thought in Germany, Barth, has abandoned it for a repristinated Calvinism. But true liberalism is nothing more than the persistent search for the truth. Failure may attach to it here and there, but on the whole it cannot be a failure unless theism itself is a huge mistake. We have found some failure in the efforts of the thinkers we have been studying. Their great failure is but one, the lack of thoroughness, and this we have ascribed to their conservatism. They have generally failed to face all the facts. They have been conservative because of their Christian experience and because the long accepted interpretation of this at certain points has seemed to them both right and conclusive. But even in regard to this experience they have failed fully to face the facts. Christian experience embraces both matters of the inward experience of the Christian and many aspects also of his experience of the world and life. These facts have not been fully faced by the modern movement which we have been reviewing, as a whole. In emphasizing the love of God, it has forgotten His justice. In magnifying His gentleness, it has forgotten His sternness. Such phenomena as the grim facts of nature, its hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, plagues, famines, shipwrecks, and the like, have not been faced. The hard facts of history, the vices of men, their greed, and the effect of these upon society, together with such mon-

strous evils as war, the starvation of men here in the United States, in the midst of plenty, have not been taken into consideration. These latter things are forms or results of the great, fundamental evil, the root of all the rest, the evil of sin.

Under the influence of Bushnell's emphasis upon Christian nurture, which was needed and valuable, the facts about conversion have been neglected. The critical importance of a distinct putting oneself by a distinct act of the will, once for all and unchangeably, on the side of God in the struggles of this life, has been forgotten. The lamentable consequences of the often indiscriminate reception of the very young into membership in the church, in the indifference to religion which they later too often display, ought to have led to corrective thinking. There was too much truth in the bitter sarcasm which a clergyman once uttered about the general custom of the pastor giving the right hand to the new members at their reception: "It's a very good thing to do, for he will never see them again."

And, in such a time as this, when the greed of men has brought us to the greatest collapse which this nation ever knew, the preaching of repentance, like that of Savonarola or Jonathan Edwards, is the crying demand of the hour. And back of that, a theology is needed which gives its just place to the wrath of God.

Back to facts, then, back to all the facts, back to the grim facts of the actual world, and back to sound thinking upon these facts, the liberal theology must go. Or, to put it in another and a better way, liberalism must go *forward* to a new consideration of these facts and to a new formulation of truth in relation to them.

The reality of Christian experience is as truly a reality as any other form of consciousness. It has its own laws and its own truths. Other truths may seem to be in contradiction of it, but this will be resolvable into harmony. This is the position of new truths discovered in every department of thought. It is the task, the hopeful task, and ultimately the successful task, of further investigation and thought, to discover this harmony of truth. The result is Christian theology. Under this effort,

verbal inspiration yields to the position that the Bible is the chief record of Christian experience. It is therefore a primary source of theology. The new theology is principally different from the old in the manner of the use of that experience. The result is the destruction of the methods by which the old theology was developed, that is, of the scaffolding by help of which the edifice was constructed. The new theology is, therefore, more vital because founded upon a better understanding of the eternal facts of genuine Christian experience. The prospect is that such a theology will produce increasingly a better form of piety, a more vital form of Christianity, and better Christian living, first in individuals and then in society at large.

God grant that it may be so.

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